

SUMMER AND AUTUMN 1959

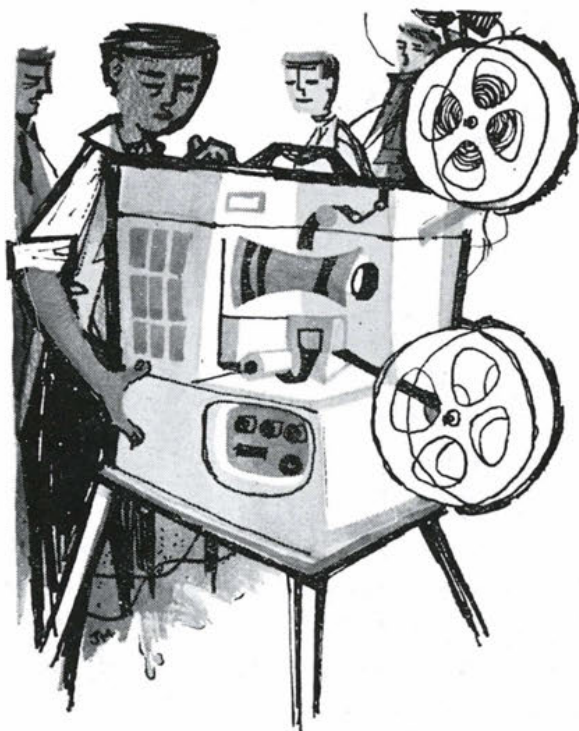
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SIGHT AND SOUND

DOUBLE NUMBER



The Film Quarterly



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You can build up a programme to suit every taste from the Ford Film Library Catalogue. The wide range of subjects includes *The Story of the Motor Car Engine*, Dick ('The Little Island') Williams' new colour cartoon film which instructs and entertains young and old. (To amplify the points of this film in classroom use, copies of an illustrated folder may be ordered when booking the film.)

Bandwagon, a sales film with a difference—an 'off beat' treatment of Thames vans featuring the Cy Laurie jazz band. It sells you and sends you.

The Three Graces—through France and Switzerland to the sun-drenched Riviera in a Consul, Zephyr convertible and a Zodiac. Just the film if you're holiday planning!

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A NEW SHELL FILM

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In jungle or desert, in valleys or on mountain-tops, people need fuel for cooking, refrigeration, heating and for many other purposes. Supplies for the more inaccessible places are often a problem: here, cylinders of Shell 'Butagaz'—liquified petroleum gas—are taken by pony to isolated mountain cabins in the Swiss Alps.

'Pattern of Supply' is in colour, and 16mm. and 35mm. copies can be supplied. Its running time is 27 mins.

In England and Wales copies are available on loan from Shell-Mex and B.P. Limited, Shell-Mex House, Strand, London, W.C.2.
In Scotland, from Scottish Oils and Shell-Mex Limited, 53 Boswell Street, Glasgow, C.2.
In other countries from the local Shell company.
Copies are not available from the Petroleum Films Bureau.

London School of Film Technique

2nd ANNIVERSARY

The School wishes to thank all those who have helped to make its first two years an increasing success. With their help 79 day and 64 evening students from the United Kingdom and 26 other countries have been trained in the basic techniques and have made thirty-four 16 mm. and 35 mm. film exercises, averaging ten minutes in length.

Thanks are due especially to busy professional technicians—producers, directors, lighting cameramen, editors, etc.—who have given so many lectures and demonstrations for nominal fees.

Thanks are due equally to those who have loaned valuable equipment: to those who supply 'short ends' of film stock: to those who have allowed students to watch film making in professional studios: to County Educational Authorities who have supplied students with grants and awards: to the British Film Institute for the use of their film library and for supplying special series of lectures: to the employers—British and Overseas—who have taken on 90% of our students: and to the students themselves who have helped evolve, through experience, better methods of film training.



THE NEXT BASIC COURSES COMMENCE 9th NOVEMBER AND
18th NOVEMBER 1959

Each course is limited to twelve students. Minimum educational standards required:—
Five passes at 'O' level in G.C.E. or equivalent examination. All prospective students must complete an application form and those resident in the United Kingdom will also be required to attend for an interview.



Details from the Secretary

THE LONDON SCHOOL OF FILM TECHNIQUE

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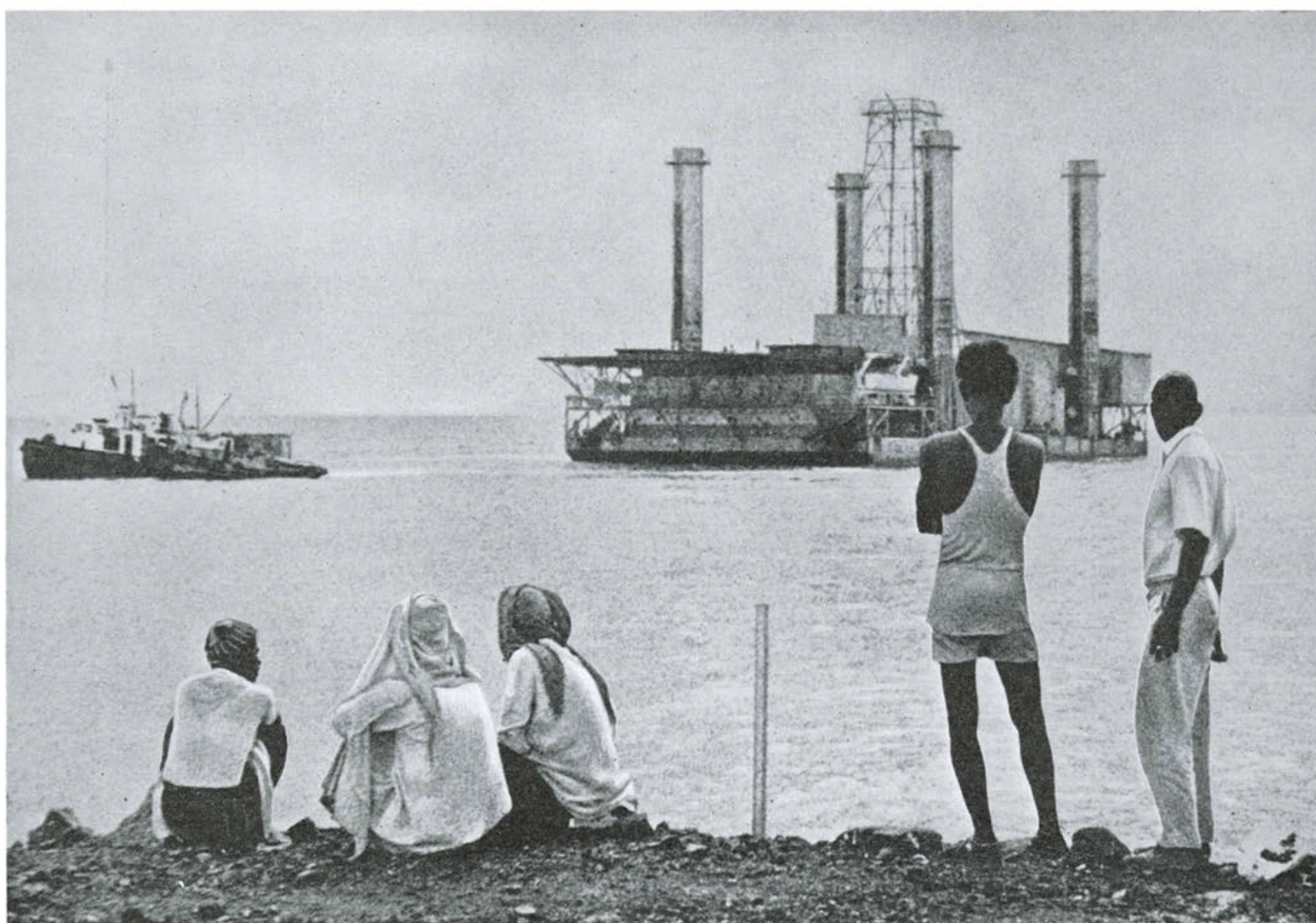
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N.B. "Magdana's Donkey" can also be obtained on 16mm — Hire fee £3.

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These are the subjects and settings of BP films of which normally 35mm. and 16mm. copies are available on loan to any recognised organisation.

Films are available free of charge. Telephone or write to the Petroleum Films Bureau at the address on the left.



The International Film Quarterly

SIGHT AND SOUND

DOUBLE NUMBER VOL. 28 NOS. 3 AND 4 SUMMER-AUTUMN 1959

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SIGHT AND SOUND is an independent critical magazine sponsored and published by the British Film Institute. It is not an organ for the expression of official British Film Institute policy; signed articles represent the views of their authors, and not necessarily those of the Editorial Board.

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La Dolce Vita

The rich, the idle and the publicity-seeking, as observed by a press reporter (Marcello Mastroianni), form the subject of Fellini's new film. The cast includes Anouk Aimée, Lex Barker, Luise Rainer and (left and below) Anita Ekberg as a contemporary glamour symbol.



FILMS FROM THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE

The following films have been added to the Distribution Library during the last three months.

	Reels Sd./St.	Gauge mm.	Running Time
ART AND HISTORY OF THE FILM			
Dim Little Island	1 Sd.	35	10 mins.
Enginemen	2 Sd.	16	18 mins.
Gentleman in Room Six	1 Sd.	16/35	10 mins.
Kamet Conquered	5 Sd.	35	55 mins.
Lumiere (French Commentary)	3 Sd.	16	33 mins.
Rien ne va Plus (Harold Lloyd) French titles	1 St.	16	12 mins.
FILMS ON THE ARTS			
Le Cubisme (Engl. Commentary)	2 Sd.	16 col.	18 mins.
Dom (Polish Experimental Film)	1 Sd.	35 col.	10 mins.
Gripping Beast, The (English Version)	2 Sd.	16 col.	17 mins.
Le Merle (N.F.B. Canada)	1 Sd.	16/35 col.	5 mins.
Neighbours (N.F.B. Canada)	1 Sd.	16/35 col.	8 mins.
Potteries Grecques (Engl. Commentary)	2 Sd.	16 col.	18 mins.
STUDY EXTRACTS			
Kind Hearts and Coronets "A"	1 Sd.	16	10 mins.
Lady Killers "A"	1 Sd.	16	10 mins.
Man of Aran "A"	1 Sd.	16	10 mins.
Tell England "A"	2 Sd.	16	22 mins.
B.F.I. SPECIALISED LIBRARY			
Television			
Street Traders (AR/TV.)	2 Sd.	16	14 mins.
Television comes to London (1935)	2 Sd.	16/35	18 mins.
Tramps (AR/TV. Look in on London)	2 Sd.	16	15 mins.
FILMS MADE BY CHILDREN			
The Robot (Speedwell Boys' Schl., Bristol) (To be projected at sound speed.)	1 St.	16	5 mins.
SCIENTIFIC LIBRARY			
Inclusion Body Encephalitis	1 St.	16	7 mins.
FILMS FOR C.B.A. REGISTERED MEMBERS			
The Day Manolete Died	2 Sd.	16/35	19 mins.
Energetically Yours	2 Sd.	35 col.	15 mins.
A Glass of Beer	9 Sd.	35	95 mins.
Momma Don't Allow	2 Sd.	16	18 mins.
On The 12th Day	2 Sd.	16/35 col.	23 mins.
The Stranger Left No Card	2 Sd.	16/35	23 mins.
Two Men and a Wardrobe	2 Sd.	16	15 mins.
Story of a Swan	5 Sd.	35	50 mins.

FILMS WITHDRAWN

Bicycle Thieves

Bread, Love & Dreams

Umberto D. (from 31 Dec. 1959)

Please Note that Momma Don't Allow on 35 mm. has been withdrawn.

The 16 mm. version has been transferred to C.B.A. (see "Films for C.B.A. registered members" section)

Also Withdrawn: Kidney Function in Health—4 Sd. Col., Science Sect.

LECTURES, 1959

OCTOBER

Date	Time	Subject	Speaker	Location	Organiser
1	6.00 p.m.	Running a School Film Society	Jack Smith	National Film Theatre	London County Council Education Dept. (course for Teachers)
1	—	Film Production Today	W. Charles Everett	R.A.F., Chigweel	London Services Education Committee
2	4.30 p.m.	Looking at Films	W. Charles Everett	Braintree	County High School, Braintree School Society
3	Half-Day School	The Film in France	John Huntley	Hemel Hempstead	Dacorum Divisional Executive
3/4	Weekend School	The Cinema Today and Running a Discussion Group	Paddy Whannel	Ford Castle	N.E. Reg. Group of Fed. of Film Societies and Dept. of E-M. Studies, King's College, Newcastle
4	7.45 p.m.	Introduction to Film Course: "Americans on the Screen"	Brian Groombridge	Bexleyheath	Bexley Adult Education Centre, Bexleyheath
6	10.00 a.m.	The Work of De Sica	Stanley Reed	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science and Technology
6	6.00 p.m.	Film Fundamentals	Paddy Whannel	Institute of Education	University of London Institute of Education

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Organiser</i>
8	6.00 p.m.	Film, Television and Persuasion	Paddy Whannel	National Film Theatre	London County Council Education Dept. (course for Teachers)
11	7.45 p.m.	Introducing feature: "Mr. Deeds Goes to Town"	Paddy Whannel	Bexleyheath	Bexley Adult Education Centre
11	8.00 p.m.	Introducing and analysing "On The Waterfront"	John Huntley	Broadstairs	Kingsgate College, Broadstairs (Y.M.C.A.)
12	—	History of the Cinema	Irvine Hunt	H.M. Prison, Dartmoor	H.M. Prison, Dartmoor
13	2.00 p.m.	The Film in Society	Paddy Whannel	Battersea College of Technology	Battersea College of Technology
13	10.00 a.m.	Hollywood Film-Making	Brian Groombridge	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science and Technology
13	6.00 p.m.	Creative Artists in Film-Making	Stanley Reed	Institute of Education	University of London Institute of Education
14	7.30 p.m.	The Beginnings of Cinema	John Huntley	Purley Central Library	University of London Department of Extra-Mural Studies
15	6.00 p.m.	Practical Appreciation	Grace Greiner	National Film Theatre	London County Council Education Dept. (Course for Teachers)
15	7.30 p.m.	How Films are Made	John Huntley	School of Arts and Crafts, Gt. Yarmouth	Gt. Yarmouth Education Authority
15	7.30 p.m.	A Film Director Today	Clive Donner	Stafford Arts Centre	Stafford Film Society
15	4.00 p.m.	Hollywood Film-Making	Alan Lovell	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science and Technology
15/17	Film Course	Film Appreciation	Paddy Whannel & Irvine Hunt	St. Austell, Launceston and Plymouth	University of Exeter Institute of Education
17/18	Weekend Course	Realism and the Cinema	John Huntley & Anthony Simmons	Debden House Loughton	County Borough of East Ham Education Committee
18	7.00 p.m.	Analysis of "Twelve Angry Men"	Brian Groombridge	Oxford	City of Oxford Youth Film Society
19	7.45 p.m.	The Japanese Cinema	John Huntley	Tunbridge Wells	Tunbridge Wells Film Society
20	6.00 p.m.	Music and the Sound Track	John Huntley	Institute of Education	University of London Institute of Education
20	10.00 p.m.	The Films of Kazan	Brian Groombridge	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science and Technology
20	8.00 p.m.	Music and the Film	Jack Smith	West Wickham	West Wickham Film Society
21	7.30 p.m.	Early Days of the Silent Cinema	Stanley Reed	Purley Central Library	University of London Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies
21	1.30 p.m.	Kurosawa	John Huntley	John Lewis, Oxford Street	John Lewis Partnership Social Club
21	10.45 a.m. & 2.45 p.m.	Looking at the Movies	Paddy Whannel	Hemel Hempstead	Hemel Hempstead Festival of the Arts
21	8.00 p.m.	Adaptation of Foreign Films into English	Ivor Montagu	Hemel Hempstead	Hemel Hempstead Festival of the Arts
22	6.00 p.m.	Film Teaching Materials	John Huntley	National Film Theatre	L.C.C. Education Department (Course for Teachers)
22	4.00 p.m.	The Films of Kazan	Paddy Whannel	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science and Technology
23	2.00 p.m.	Free Cinema	Paddy Whannel	Brixton	London School of Film Technique
25	7.45 p.m.	Analysis of "The Grapes of Wrath"	Brian Groombridge	Bexleyheath	Bexley Adult Education Centre
25	8.00 p.m.	Adaptation of Foreign Films into English	Ivor Montagu	Camberley	Camberley Film Society
27	10.00 a.m.	The New Realism	Brian Groombridge	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science
27	6.00 p.m.	Cinema and Mass Media	Paddy Whannel	Institute of Education	University of London Institute of Education
27	5.30 p.m.	Music and the Film	John Huntley	Chichester	Bishop Otter College, Chichester
28	7.30 p.m.	Great Days of the Silent Cinema	Stanley Reed	Purley Central Library	University of London Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies
28	7.00 p.m.	Film Censorship	John Trevelyan	Newcastle-on-Tyne	Dyer Memorial Lecture (Tyneside Film Society)
28	6.30 p.m.	The Cinema Industry	W. Charles Everett	Deptford Round Table	City of London Society
28	7.15 p.m.	The Cartoon Film	John Halas	Farnborough	R.A.E. Farnborough Film Society
29	7.30 p.m.	Free Cinema	Paddy Whannel	Slough	Slough Film Society
30/Nov.1	Weekend	Film Appreciation	Paddy Whannel & Brian Groombridge	Shanklin, I.O.W.	Isle of Wight County Council
31	Half-Day School	The Film in Italy	John Huntley	Hemel Hempstead	Dacorum Divisional Executive
NOVEMBER					
1	7.00 p.m.	Stars of the Silent Cinema	John Huntley	Holborn	Holborn Film Society
3	10.00 a.m.	Films of Carol Reed	Alan Lovell	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science
3	6.00 p.m.	Film, T.V. and the Child	Paddy Whannel	Institute of Education	University of London Institute of Education

<i>Date</i>	<i>Time</i>	<i>Subject</i>	<i>Speaker</i>	<i>Location</i>	<i>Organiser</i>
4	7.30 p.m.	The Coming of Sound	John Huntley	Purley Central Library	University of London Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies
5	4.00 p.m.	The Films of Carol Reed	Paddy Whannel	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science
6	8.30 p.m.	The Sociology of Cinema	Paddy Whannel	Indian Institute of World Culture W.2.	Indian Institute of World Culture
6/8	Weekend	Dickens and the Cinema	Roger Manvell & John Huntley	Attingham Park, Shrewsbury	Attingham Park Film Society
7/8	Weekend	The Teenager as Star and Viewer	Paddy Whannel & Brian Groombridge	Hassocks, Sussex	East Sussex Education Committee
8	7.45 p.m.	Analysis of Feature Film "Human Desire"	Alan Lovell	Bexleyheath	Bexley Adult Education Centre
9	8.15 p.m.	The British Film Industry	W. Charles Everett	Paddington Young Conservatives	City of London Society
9	—	The Sound Track	Irvine Hunt	H.M. Prison, Dartmoor	H.M. Prison, Dartmoor
10	6.00 p.m.	Principles of Film Teaching	Stanley Reed	Institute of Education	University of London Institute of Education
10	10.00 a.m.	The Films of David Lean	Alan Lovell	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science
11	1.30 p.m.	The Films of Mack Sennett	Roger Manvell	John Lewis, Oxford Street	John Lewis Partnership Social Club
11	7.30 p.m.	Production of a Modern Film	John Huntley	Purley Central Library	University of London Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies
14/15	Weekend	Films of Bergman and Soviet Cinema	Michael Meyer John Gillett Ivor Montagu	Cober Hill, Scarborough	University of Hull Dept. of Adult Education and N. Fed. of Film Societies
17	6.30 p.m.	Film Themes	Stanley Reed	B.B.C. Television Studios	B.B.C. Film Club
17	10.00 a.m.	Free Cinema	Brian Groombridge	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science
17	7.00 p.m.	Film Music	John Hollingsworth	Chelmsford	Chelmsford and District Film Society
17	5.20 p.m.	Film Appreciation	Paddy Whannel	Cheltenham	St. Paul's College, Cheltenham
17	6.00 p.m.	Teaching Methods I	Jack Smith	Institute of Education	University of London Institute of Education
18	2.00 p.m.	Film Production	W. Charles Everett	R.A.F., Chessington	London Services Education Committee
18	7.30 p.m.	The Role of the Director	Stanley Reed	Purley Central Library	University of London Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies
19	4.00 p.m.	Free Cinema	Stanley Reed	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science
20	2.00 p.m.	Analysis of Two Feature Films	Paddy Whannel	Brixton	London School of Film Technique
20	6.45 p.m.	Development of the Musical Film	John Huntley	Isleworth	Heston & Isleworth Grammar Schools' Film Society
22	7.45 p.m.	Analysis of "On the Waterfront"	Alan Lovell	Bexleyheath	Bexley Adult Education Centre
24	10.00 a.m.	The Polish Cinema	Alan Lovell	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science
24	6.00 p.m.	Teaching Method II	Don Waters	Institute of Education	University of London Institute of Education
25	7.30 p.m.	Music and the Film	John Huntley	Purley Central Library	University of London Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies
26	4.00 p.m.	The Polish Cinema	Alan Lovell	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science
26	5.30 p.m.	Film Appreciation	Paddy Whannel	Darlington	Darlington Training College
26	7.45 p.m.	Not yet fixed	John Huntley	Purley	Purley & District Film Society
27	7.15 p.m.	The Art of the Film	Paddy Whannel	Middlesborough	University of Leeds (Adult Education Centre)
30	7.00 p.m.	Early Hitchcock films	Ivor Montagu	Newcastle-on-Tyne	Tyneside Film Society
DECEMBER					
1	6.00 p.m.	Teaching Method II	Tony Higgins	Institute of Education	University of London Institute of Education
1	10.00 a.m.	Recent Soviet Films	Alan Lovell	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science
2	7.30 p.m.	Social Aspects of the Cinema	Stanley Reed	Purley Central Library	University of London Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies
3	4.00 p.m.	Recent Soviet Films	Alan Lovell	Chelsea	Chelsea College of Science
4	2.00 p.m.	The Sound Track	John Huntley	Brixton	London School of Film Technique
5	One-day	"Cinema and Television"	Stanley Reed Paddy Whannel Brian Groombridge	University of Bristol	University of Bristol Institute of Education
5	Half-day	The Film in Poland	John Huntley	Hemel Hempstead	Dacorum Divisional Executive
6	7.45 p.m.	Analysis of "Bachelor Party"	Brian Groombridge	Bexleyheath	Bexley Adult Education Centre
6	Not yet fixed	Film Editing	Irvine Hunt	H.M. Prison, Dartmoor	H.M. Prison, Dartmoor
7	7.30 p.m.	Music in Films	John Huntley	London, W.C.2.	The Grasshopper Group
8	6.00 p.m.	The Teacher and the Cinema	Paddy Whannel	Institute of Education	University of London Institute of Education

Date	Time	Subject	Speaker	Location	Organiser
9	8.00 p.m.	Analysis of "Pather Panchali"	Ralph Stephenson	Broadstairs	Kingsgate College (Y.M.C.A.)
9	5.15 p.m.	Feature Films for Educationists	Paddy Whannel	Bedford	Bedford College of Physical Education
9	1.30 p.m.	Modern Slapstick	John Huntley	John Lewis, Oxford Street	John Lewis Partnership Social Club
11	7.30 p.m.	Film Criticism	Paddy Whannel	Gosford Hill Adult Centre, Kidlington	Kidlington Film Society (Oxfordshire Ed. Committee)
20	7.45 p.m.	Analysis of "From Here to Eternity"	Alan Lovell	Bexleyheath	Bexley Adult Education Centre
20	7.00 p.m.	Photography	Matt McCarthy	Oxford	City of Oxford Youth Film Society

UNIVERSITY OF LONDON EXTRA-MURAL CLASSES ON FILM HELD AT THE BRITISH FILM INSTITUTE DURING THE AUTUMN, WINTER AND SPRING

BASIC COURSES (for beginners)

Monday and Tuesday Evenings (identical course on both nights). 24 weekly sessions

The Art of the Film. A basic course on the Art and History of the Cinema.

Monday lecturer: A. D. Whannel Time: 7-9 p.m. Fee £1

Tuesday lecturer: John Huntley Time: 7-9 p.m. Fee £1

Commencing September 28th and 29th respectively

ADVANCED COURSES (To meet the needs of students who have already taken part in the University Extension Basic courses)

Thursday and Friday Evenings (identical course on both nights) 24 weekly sessions

The Scope and Development of Film Experiment in the Mid-Twentieth Century

Lecturers on both nights: John Huntley, Stanley Reed, A. D. Whannel

Commencing October 1st and 2nd respectively

Application forms for enrolment from the Lecture Department, British Film Institute, 4 Great Russell Street, W.C.1. COVent Garden 2801.

THE BOOK LIBRARY

Two extremely valuable donations have been received during the past three months. One from the Executors of the late Walter Mycroft's estate, of books and periodicals, and the other from Darrell Catling of over 500 books and periodicals together with files of other related material. The Institute thanks the donors for their great generosity.

The following books have recently been added to the library. (Those marked with an asterisk are available for loan to members.)

- *ANDERSON, Joseph & RITCHIE, Donald.—The Japanese film. New York, Chas. E. Tuttle. 1959.
- *BARTOK, Eva.—Worth living for. London, Putnam. 1959.
- BARTOLINI, Elio (ed.).—Il Grido di Michelangelo Antonioni. Rome, Cappelli. 1957.
- BORDE, BUACHE & COURTADE.—Le Cinéma réaliste allemand. Paris, Documents de cinéma. 1959.
- *BULL, Peter.—I know the face but . . . London, Peter Davies. 1959.
- *CARSON, Robert.—Love affair. London, Heinemann. 1959.
- *CLAIR, René.—Comédies et commentaires. Paris, Gallimard. 1959.
- *CONNOR, Rearden.—Shake hands with the devil. London, Panther. 1959.
- COWLES, Fleur.—Case of Salvador Dali. London, Heinemann. 1959.
- *DE LA ROCHE, Catherine.—Vincente Minnelli. New Zealand Film Institute. 1959.
- *DENSHAM, D. H.—The construction of research films. London, Pergamon Press. 1959.
- EMERY, F. E. & MARTIN, D.—Psychological effects of Western films. Melbourne, The University. 1957.
- *FITZGERALD, F. Scott.—The last tycoon. London, Bodley Head. 1958.
- GANS, Herbert, J.—American film and television programmes on British screens. Pennsylvania University. 1959.
- *GASKILL, A. & ENGLANDER, D.—How to shoot a movie story. New York, Morgan & Morgan. 1959.
- GRAHAM, Sheila & FRANK, Gerold.—Beloved infidel. London, Cassell. 1959.
- HEAD, Edith & ARDMORE, Jane.—The Dress doctor. New York, Little Brown & Co. 1959.
- *ISKUSSTVO MILLIONOV.—Sovietskoie kino 1917-1957. Moscow. 1958.
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THE FRONT PAGE

THE NATIONAL FILM FINANCE CORPORATION'S annual report, issued last July, could not but make gloomy reading. The Corporation lost almost twice as much (£222,367) on its 1958 operations as on those of the previous year; of the 33 feature films it assisted, 19 will probably lose money, ten being lucky if they recover even half their costs; and its own £8m. resources are now largely committed. If the Corporation can avoid future losses only at the cost of drastically curtailing its activities, the Report stated, "Parliament will have to decide whether the balance of advantage lies in providing the Corporation with further funds or leaving the industry to endeavour to find its finance elsewhere."

This bleak hint was taken up by *The Times* in its truculent leader headed "Time for the Curtain", influentially echoed ten days later by *The Economist*. "After ten years," said *The Times*, "it is no part of the tax-payer's duty to finance restrictive practices in an industry which cannot pay its way." Selecting for disapproving reference the NFFC's backing of such films as *Fiend Without a Face* or *Night in a Harem*, it boomed out a ponderous "the time has come to call a halt." *The Economist*, seeing the Corporation as "a film bank which never expects to see the money it lends back," ended its leader on a forlorn query: "Are British films worth an almost open subsidy if the British public do not find them worth looking at?"

Answers came rapidly and forcefully, mainly from independent producers who rely on NFFC aid. Discounting the British Lion loan, the Corporation has lost only £127,000 annually on average during its ten years. Is this really such a heavy yearly subsidy? Over £300m., a group of producers pointed out to *The Times*, has in the same period been paid out through Entertainments Tax; half the ten years' deficit, Mr. Herbert Wilcox cogently emphasised, could be regarded as made up by the tax contributed on a single one of his pictures—*Spring in Park Lane*. Add to these examples such economic factors as the overseas earnings of British films, and the price we are paying to keep almost half our industry alive looks a very small one.

Problems arise, however, from the whole nature of the Corporation's function. It has a duty "to avoid making losses"; and it has a duty "to assist British film production by lending money which cannot be obtained through the ordinary banking system." The two duties, as the Corporation itself realises, are finally incompatible. It backed probably the two most successful British films of the year, *Room at the Top* and *Carry on, Nurse*; and both presumably looked like fairly safe bets. But what of the 19 films which are losing money: are they the horror pieces, or the second grade thrillers, or the handful of enterprising productions (it would be unfair to suggest titles) which would probably never have reached the screen without the NFFC?

Forced to operate by what *The Times* calls "industrial" rather than "cultural" standards, the NFFC cannot go out of its way to encourage the producer who wants to take a chance on a picture of quality. To curtail its activities would still further narrow the field for such producers. Many people, like Brian Desmond Hurst in his contribution to *The Times* controversy, would argue that there is a case here for a genuine subsidy, something to encourage British production to move to a higher level, which the NFFC by its present terms of reference is unable to provide. With changing audience habits, gambles of the order represented by *Room at the Top* or *Look Back in Anger* must increasingly be taken. One possible means of encouragement has already been indicated in SIGHT AND SOUND: some variation on the French system whereby a "film of quality" receives a direct cash reward. The argument that this opens the cinema to the rule of bureaucratic committees, doling out prizes according to their own arbitrary standards, has not prevented the method from working in a country traditionally more individualistic than our own.

Meanwhile, the Corporation's own recommendations demand attention. It may be vain to suggest that stars should accept lower salaries and a share in the profits. This system works in America; but here, by the NFFC's own evidence, profits are often hard to come by. The other suggestion, that the film industry should break away from the old convention of "front

money" (representing the distributor's guarantee) and "end money" (30 per cent of the cost, which the producer has to find) seems perhaps more directly practical. By the present system the distributor, as the Report points out, "may be inclined to give a front money guarantee for a film in which he does not necessarily have whole-hearted confidence: if the whole of the end money... is lost, the distributor may still secure benefits by way of extra product (which he needs to pay his overhead costs) and the profit element included in the commission charged for distributing, as distinct from financing, the film." The NFFC, to whom the producer is likely to look for a considerable share of the "end money", comes at present towards the end of the queue for repayment, and the Report suggests more general adoption of a system whereby investments would be recoverable on a *pari passu* basis. This financing pattern, the NFFC comments, "would ensure that distributors were protecting the producer's (and thus the Corporation's) investment with their own." Whether the recommendation proves acceptable or not to the industry, one fact seems to remain certain: the NFFC plays too essential a part in the film industry's workings to be sacrificed.

* * *

THE PRINTING DISPUTE caught us last June with the Summer SIGHT AND SOUND in proof; and we would like to thank the many readers who wrote agitatedly or sadly to express their disappointment at the magazine's non-appearance. Instead, we are now combining two issues in this single double number, which carries, along with considerable new material, several features originally planned for July publication. Late though

they may be, we believe it is none the less valuable to publish such features as the Cannes Festival report, the reviews of films which have now run their course, or David Robinson's article on *Look Back in Anger*. (Regarding this as outstanding among recent British films, we regret that circumstances made it impossible for us to salute it at a more appropriate time.)

The main theme of this number, though, is a new one: the *nouvelle vague*, independent young cinema, breakthrough, or whatever name one chooses to give it. The various moves towards a nonconformist cinema are rapidly assuming world-wide significance. There are the independents, in France, America and elsewhere, who see film-making not as a business of studios and distribution guarantees but of going out and, somehow, shooting a picture. Other young directors, working within the commercial system, are helping to change its established patterns. Many of the new movements contradict each other, and it would be arbitrary to try to link them too closely. But these young film-makers seem to share their distrust of older generations, their view of the cinema essentially as a means of self-expression, and their confidence that what matters is here and now, the sense and atmosphere of the moment.

With the breakdown of the trusted commercial formulae, the cinema today presents an appearance very different from the calm, assured landscape of a few years ago. It is now a less well charted and more exciting territory; and it is these new movements, more than anything else, which will shape the cinema of the 1960's. In this issue, we carry a number of reports and analyses. In subsequent numbers we hope to follow the same trail a little further afield.



GEORGES SADOUL

Notes on a

NEW

GENERATION



THE 1959 CANNES FESTIVAL brought dazzling recognition to the new film-makers in France, through a whole series of official and unofficial awards. The Palme d'Or went to Marcel Camus' *Orfeu Negro*, the Best Direction Prize to François Truffaut's *Les quatre cents coups*, the International Critics' Prize to Alain Resnais' *Hiroshima mon amour*; among other awards, Edmond Séchan's short *Poisson Rouge* achieved a Special Jury Prize and Raymond Vogel's *La Mer et les Jours* a prize for the best short film of youth. In France, during these last few months, we have been watching the promotion of these and other directors, film-makers whose first feature essays have won them international critical recognition as well as the attention of the French mass public.

The newcomers vary considerably in age. Some (Chabrol, Truffaut, Vadim, etc.) have been able to embark on feature direction while still in their twenties. Others (Camus, Franju, Rouch, Baratier) were already in their forties before they had a chance to make their first features. But in spite of these age differences, they make up together a whole group of film-makers who may one day find themselves labelled as the "1960 generation."

This rapid advance seems the more remarkable in that the French cinema, since the war, has given us so few new directors. Those whose talent has flourished since the Liberation were for the most part already known for work done before the war or during the Occupation. And for more than ten years some of the best of them (Marcel Carné, Jean Grémillon,

Georges Rouquier) have been reduced virtually to silence, while the new talents that might have come along have been denied entry to the studios.

MARCEL CAMUS

THE CASE OF MARCEL CAMUS, winner of the Cannes Grand Prix, is a fairly typical one. Born in 1912, Camus had been a painter and sculptor before spending five years as a prisoner of war; then, as an assistant director, he worked with some of the best among French film-makers—Jacques Feyder, Becker, Georges Rouquier—as well as with Luis Buñuel. But he had to wait until he was forty-five before he made his first feature, *Mort en fraude*, which tackled boldly and bravely the difficult subject of the Vietnamese war.

His *Orfeu Negro*, inspired by a play by Vinicius de Moraes, transposes the classic Orpheus legend among the Negroes of Rio de Janeiro, in the general setting of a carnival. Camus began work on his film in Brazil in February, 1958, but after shooting location street scenes of the carnival his money ran out before he could embark on the direction proper. He spent long months in Brazil waiting for the chance to begin work again. "Perhaps after all," he's said, "my film benefited from these hitches. For weeks I had to walk about the streets of Rio, since I couldn't even afford to take taxis. At least this gave me the chance to know the city better, to feel I really understood something of its character and people."

Orfeu Negro is to some extent a film ballet. Its story develops during the few orgiastic days of carnival; its Negro characters are a dance group, winners of a prize in a samba contest; and most of its vibrant, highly-coloured sequences are dominated by dance and music. All the same, the ballet treatment does not cut the film off from the realities of Brazilian existence: Orpheus (Breno Mello) drives a tram; Eurydice (Marpessa Dawn) is a peasant girl newly arrived in

Above: Marcel Camus in Brazil. Opposite page: the "nouvelle vague" at Cannes. Foreground (left to right): François Truffaut, Raymond Vogel, Louis Félix, Edmond Séchan. Second row: Edouard Molinaro, Jacques Baratier, Jean Valère. Third row: François Reichenbach, Robert Hossein, Jean-Daniel Pollet, Roger Vadim, Marcel Camus. Back row: Claude Chabrol, Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, Jean-Luc Godard, Jacques Rczier.

the city. They and their friends live on the "Morros," the steep bluffs above Rio, in shacks knocked together out of petrol cans and bits of wood. The misery of these "Favelas" overhangs the rich modern districts of the city. But the Negroes have the right to invade the streets with their songs and dances for three days each year, at carnival time. . .

Although Jacques Viot's script tries rather too mechanically to follow the Orpheus legend, the film as a whole is stamped with warmth and generosity, carried along on the rhythms of the music, the dancing, the colour, the landscapes, the sense of the passing hours. Throughout, it is played by non-professionals: Orpheus is a lawyer and also a football star; the rest of the group is drawn from taxi drivers, secretaries, students, typists. Only one of them, Marpessa Dawn, was previously an actress. But the director's confidence has enabled him to harness the talent and temperament of these amateur players. Without a studio, and more or less without actors, the film often achieves something very like perfection in its *mise en scène*.

"One of my themes," Camus has said, "was the denunciation of apathy: apathy in religion (as shown with the religious sect of the Macumba); apathy in public office, symbolised by the advance of red-tape bureaucracy; apathy in face of the distress which rules those white hells of the hospital and the mortuary. . ." And when one sees the many good qualities of this *Orfeu Negro*, presented by a director already in his late forties, we can only regret the films Camus might have given the cinema during those ten years when no producer would let him make the features he dreamt about.

JACQUES BARATIER

JACQUES BARATIER, now forty years old, has something in common with Camus and also with Jean Rouch: all three have enriched French cinema with films made not only outside France but outside Europe. And Baratier's own first feature, *Goha*, is also the first feature production from the young Tunisian cinema.

Coming to the cinema after the war, Baratier was for ten years able to work only in the short film field, where his films (*Désordres*, 1949; *Paris la Nuit*, 1955, made with Jean Valère) gave clear enough evidence of his ability. Fascinated by North Africa, where he had spent his military service, he had a long-time dream of working there on a film. He thought at first of an adaptation from Molière, played by an Arab cast; but this project was in fact carried out, without him, in Morocco and resulted in a pretty mediocre film.

Baratier then turned towards *Goha le Simple*, the hero of popular stories known throughout the Mediterranean Arab world. *Goha* is a sort of first cousin of the Flemish Till Eulenspiegel, the Asiatic Nazredin and the Turkish Karageuz,

and his adventures had already inspired a book in French which in 1920 won the Prix Goncourt for its authors, Adès and Jossipovici. Baratier used their novel as the basis for a screen treatment which might never have been realised but for Tunisia's achievement of independence. The government wanted to establish a national cinema, and its support enabled him to make his film in two language versions, Arabic and French.

Goha is in fact the result of international collaboration on quite a large scale. The dialogue writer, Schéhadé, is Lebanese; the cast includes Tunisians, Egyptians, Frenchmen, Italians. Filmed, like *Orfeu Negro*, in natural settings, *Goha's* atmosphere is that of popular legend. Its action takes place at a date never made precise, perhaps some time during the last century; its hero is that traditional character the Wise Fool, the simpleton who teaches profound lessons. *Goha* wanders around the Arab town with his donkey, jeered at by the knowing and bullied by his father, although he is not entirely friendless. His imagination has a melancholy tinge to it, his loves end in tragedy. The tone of the film is never that of Arabian Nights fantasy in the Hollywood manner, all bargain-basement exoticism, but derives its strength from the poetry of legend.

The simple but thickly-textured script by the poet Schéhadé, the striking and ingenuous personality of the Egyptian actor Omar Cherif, the unusual visual colour harmonies devised by the Tunisian artist Georges Koskas, the fine camerawork by Jean Bourgoïn (who also photographed *Orfeu Negro*), and Maurice Ohana's engaging score, all contribute to make *Goha* a strong but delicate achievement. And although Jacques Baratier must be grateful to Tunisia for having offered him the opportunity to make his first feature, he has in return given the Arab world—"this spirited and imaginative public, 400 million strong and with so many potential actors among them"—a film which borrows its inspiration directly from their own life, culture and traditions.

JEAN ROUCH

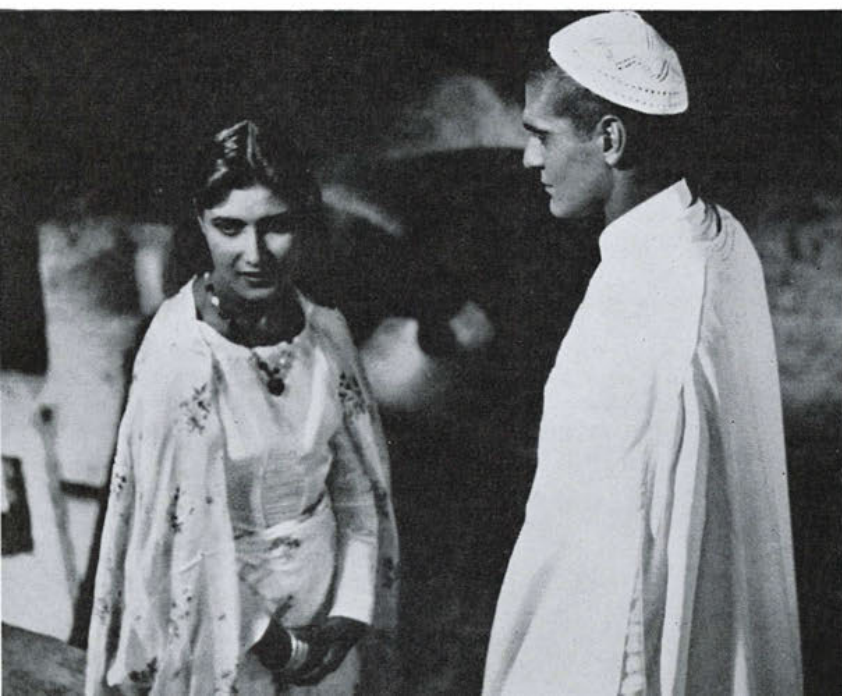
UNLIKE THE ARAB WORLD, Negro Africa still has no cinema of its own: sixty years after the invention of the technique and the art it made possible, there is, so far as I know, no single major film entirely acted, directed, scripted and photographed by any of the African peoples, in their own language.

Jean Rouch's *Moi, un Noir* (or *Treichville*) marks a step towards the indigenous African cinema of tomorrow. Its creator was born in 1917. He had been an explorer; he was engaged on research for the Musée de l'Homme in Paris; and from 1946 he was in the habit of using film as a recording instrument in his ethnographic work, in the same way as still photography or sound recording.

As Rouch gradually became more interested in the cinema, he developed a personality as a documentary director which won him prizes at festivals and international congresses. In 1955 his best short films were grouped together and blown up to 35mm. to make an ethnographic record of feature length. This was *Les Fils de l'Eau*, about African tribal life and customs. *Les Maîtres Fous*, made a year later, indicated a further stage in Rouch's development: his subject this time was not a primitive group isolated from so-called civilisation, but the contacts between the two worlds. Specifically, the film dealt with a remarkable religious sect which takes its "Gods" partly from tradition and partly from the contemporary scene, giving them such names as "The Governor" or "The Postman."

Treichville itself is a poverty-stricken district in the Abidjan area of the Ivory Coast. Its inhabitants, coming mostly from the Niger, scrape together the most precarious kind of living as unskilled labourers, taxi drivers, stevedores, prostitutes.

Jacques Baratier's "*Goha*".





FRANCE

AT

CANNES

ABOVE: Hiroshima mon Amour.
RIGHT: Orfeu Negro.
BELOW: Les Quatre Cents Coups.



In fact the script of *Moi, un Noir* was directly dictated by these people of Treichville; and the film's subject, as with *Les Maîtres Fous*, is essentially the relationship between the white and the black worlds.

The film's people have adopted for themselves the names of well-known film stars and screen heroes: Tarzan, Dorothy Lamour, Edward G. Robinson, Eddie Constantine. They express themselves by these cut-price myths, while the images reveal to us the hazards of their existence and the narrative tells us—in their own words—about the way they live.

The dock labourer who likes to call himself Edward G. Robinson tells us, for instance: "We're going to unload these sacks of coffee, on their way to the capital. Look at it. Nothing but sacks, sacks, sacks. Pick them up and dump them down—that's the job. That's what life is like for us: sacks, a life made up of sacks. At noon we go off to the special hotel that's for us Bozzaris: the poor people's hotel. We buy rice for twenty francs, and that's all we get. Some people are a bit better off. They're going to buy bread at ten francs a piece and sardines at twenty-five francs. . . How long does it take to earn 800 francs? Four days' work. . . Well, that's too much."

So, from day to day, the Negroes of Treichville are shown about their work, their leisure, their amusements. The film is split up into days. The Sunday section, with its dancing and drinking, is a little long; the return to the "day of truth" on Monday becomes moving when "Edward G. Robinson" tells and mimes how he fought as a soldier with the French forces in Indo-China.

"I've been to the wars. I've killed the Vietmin with a machine-gun, with a knife, with anything you like . . . with a grenade. We did all that. To kill people. Listen, to kill a Vietmin, you just have to lift up your knife and bang, bang . . . you've got him on the ground. I've seen blood running and my pals dying next to me. I wasn't frightened. I just said that was the way Indo-China was . . . I march along beside you and then I fall down dead. But what's that all for? It's no use to anyone. That's life, though. We're not happy; but look at these people, they're happy . . ." And, after miming by a lake shore the horrors and corpses of war, he points to the rich white settlers out on their water skis and concludes: "*Je suis un homme, je suis pauvre, mais, quand même, je suis courageux.*"

Certain Africans, concerned for the dignity of their race, have reproached Rouch's film for showing such things as drunkenness and prostitution. It could be argued that the episodes given up to these subjects are over-long, or too much built up. But this hasn't prevented him from giving us a remarkable document of modern Africa. His subject is the effects of colonialism, and the turning of some African peoples into a new proletariat. Drunkenness and prostitution are clearly linked to the poverty, the slums, the exploitation, the brutalisation of the people by the cinema and by opium, the hardships sustained in the colonial wars. Rouch's film, which won the Prix Louis Delluc for 1958, is a direct document with an intensity which makes it a work of art. It is perhaps the first feature in which the African Negro has been able to speak for himself about his own life and feelings.

CLAUDE BERNARD-AUBERT

NOW TWENTY-EIGHT, CLAUDE BERNARD-AUBERT learnt his trade in journalism and television. Like the Edward G. Robinson of *Moi, un Noir*, he served in Indo-China; and he took this war as the subject of his first film, *Patrouille de Choc*, made in 1957. Although made in Southern Vietnam with the backing of both civil and military authorities, the picture later ran into considerable censorship trouble because of its mood of savage revolt against war and its brutalities.

The same spirit of revolt governs Bernard-Aubert's *Les Tripes au Soleil*, a story set in an imaginary Latin-American town dominated by race hatred between black and white.

But the respect and sympathy one feels for the film's seething emotional convictions do not inhibit comment on the muddle and inadequacy which govern both Accursi's script and the direction. The picture was made, obviously enough, on a very low budget; and the director won his independence at the cost of having only the slenderest resources for performances, decor, the whole realisation of his subject. At the same time, as though determined at all costs to achieve a success, he has brought in several erotic episodes as facile as they are out of key. Neither the handling of the players, the mass movement, nor the dialogue is very expert.

But the film—whose export, incidentally, is forbidden by the French censor—remains noteworthy for its fervent conviction. Its mood, that of an ex-soldier in revolt, is not unrelated to that which stirred the veterans of the 1914-1918 war, and to which Abel Gance gave expression in his famous *J'Accuse* (1919). And it is good that at a time when France is engaged in ceaseless colonial conflicts, the voice of a young ex-soldier should denounce race hatred. In fact, the meaning of *Les Tripes au Soleil* is so clear that "shock troops" have interrupted several performances: stink bombs and ink pellets have been flung at the screen. Although Bernard-Aubert's talent is uneven, his vehemence and resolution are striking: his career is bound to be followed with interest.

GEORGES FRANJU

GEORGES FRANJU, BORN IN 1912, was only twenty-four when he founded the Cinémathèque Française with his friend Henri Langlois. After a lengthy collaboration with Jean Painlevé, he has developed since 1950 into one of the leading French documentarists, with *Le Sang des Bêtes*, *Poussières* and, notably, *Hôtel des Invalides* as his most celebrated achievements. Even with this reputation behind him, Franju still had to wait until his mid-forties before undertaking a feature production. His first feature, *La Tête Contre les Murs*, is a free adaptation of a novel which won a Prix Goncourt for its author, Hervé Bazin.

Its subject, a polemical one, is a criticism of the medieval and even barbaric methods still in use in some French mental hospitals, where the mentally sick are treated less as patients than as prisoners. Hard, violent, but full of tenderness and motivated by anger rather than despair, the film has imperfections both in scenario and in performance. Franju's own contribution as director, though, is of the highest order. He knows how to see and how to impose his own vision: he can discover the poetic and strange in the most commonplace settings—a suburban street corner, a billiard saloon, a hospital garden crossed by a little railway, the impersonality of official buildings, a field where the grass is burning . . .

Franju also knows how to choose his actors. Charles Aznavour, for instance, a charming and well-known singer and writer of sentimental romances, has created under his direction a touchingly honest portrayal of a pitiful epileptic. The perfect camerawork, by the great veteran Schufftan, allies itself to the obsessive sound track, in which Maurice Jarre's music is closely linked to sounds used for hauntingly evocative effect—the click of the billiard balls, the background of noise in the asylum. Already, with this single generous and passionate film, Georges Franju seems to have won his place among the major feature directors in France.

ALAIN RESNAIS

ALAIN RESNAIS' CAREER RATHER resembles that of the older Franju. Born in 1922, Resnais was a student at the IDHEC film school, then worked as editor on Nicole Vedrès' *Paris 1900*. His *Van Gogh* (1948) and *Guernica* (1949) established him in a particular documentary territory, that of the art film. He won the Prix Jean Vigo with *Les Statues Meurent Aussi* (1954), then won it again two years later with *Nuit et*



"La Tête contre les Murs": Anouk Aimée and Jean-Pierre Mocky.

Brouillard. Both films, however, encountered censorship trouble and the first (about Negro art) was finally banned. His new film is his first feature.

Hiroshima mon Amour is one of the most distinctively original works given us by the cinema in many years. Its individuality of tone, its striking novelty of expression, have provoked reactions of indifference, and some hostility. But for the most part audiences have found themselves spell-bound, almost obsessed, by this extraordinary lyric poem. This is the sort of film that can renew and change the art of the cinema.

Its strange tragedy takes place during a twenty-four hour period, from one dawn to the next. A French actress (Emanuele Riva) and a Japanese (Eiji Okada) meet at Hiroshima and fall abruptly in love. But the girl has to return to her own country, cutting short their passionate encounter. The lyric theme of the love story is developed in its relationship to the past, the worlds the two characters come from: the woman from Nevers, where she saw her German lover die and was herself savagely victimised; the man from Hiroshima itself, where the horror of atomic warfare is present as nowhere else in the world.

The film opens with twenty minutes of poetic documentary on Hiroshima, the bomb and its ravages. The editing here is exceptionally controlled; and the director has brought together newsreel shots, film sequences, views of the city as it stands today. This was the method of his earlier *Nuit et Brouillard*, a documentary driven by a noble hatred of war and the atrocities of Hitlerism. It is just this feeling that animates his new feature. "What can one make at Hiroshima, if it isn't a pacifist film?" is a question posed somewhere in the film's dialogue.

The script, by the novelist Marguerite Duras, endeavours to establish parallels between two very different types of horror: the atomic massacre of thousands, and the humiliations endured by a single young woman. And although it is true enough, as Dovzhenko once commented, that "a dew-drop can reflect the universe," it is not easy to hold an equal weight and balance between the two—the universe and the dew-drop. Certainly the writer has not always managed it here, so that the unequal character of the two dramas is accentuated by some unevenness in the dialogue. Some lines recall the sharply-etched purity of Paul Eluard (who was Resnais' collaborator on *Guernica*); others jar through the very facility of their play upon words. When the woman says, "I have the honour to have been dishonoured," or "I doubt the morality of others; I am of a doubting morality," we seem closer to boulevard smartness than lyric poetry. And some *longueurs* in the final sections of the film make it possible to overlook the very human distress of the heroine, to feel only the sense of her short-lived and slightly hysterical exaltation.

These are weaknesses, but they scarcely seem to matter when set against the film's total effect: it is like a blazing diamond whose flaws only become apparent at a second viewing. Alain Resnais has managed to give his film an extraordinary quality, in its treatment of time, its conjugation of cinematic tenses, its counterpointing of words and actions and its revelations of the marvellous in everyday life. The images (the cameramen are Sacha Vierni and Takahashi Michio) are even more haunting and personal than the sometimes spellbinding dramatic recitative of the dialogue. And, finally, the picture's romantic lyricism does not stand outside our world: this Romeo and Juliet live in the context of war and the atomic threat. They are contemporary people, and the film gives generous expression to a central drama of our time.

CLAUDE CHABROL: FRANCOIS TRUFFAUT

CHABROL AND TRUFFAUT, BOTH still in their twenties, began their careers as members of the rather exclusive group of young critics centred on *Cahiers du Cinéma*. There they defended almost as a sacred principle the "films d'auteurs." And now they have both been able to make their first films "on their own account"—rather like those novelists and poets who bring out their work at their own expense when they can't persuade editors to accept it. This has been the case with one or two others, Louis Malle among them. But it shouldn't be deduced from this that the birth of a new film school in France has been made possible only through the generosity of rich relations, allowing young men to make pictures in an independence whose basic condition is the personal possession of forty or fifty million francs.

It was an inheritance, however, that enabled Claude Chabrol to risk all he had in the production of *Le Beau Serge*, made with a cast of unknowns. The film was successful enough to be sold to a number of foreign distributors, and also to obtain an "aide à la qualité" from the Centre du Cinéma. This gave Chabrol the necessary capital to begin work almost at once on his second production, *Les Cousins*; and the result was that this very young director saw his first two films running almost simultaneously in cinemas on the Champs Elysées.

Chabrol directed and scripted *Le Beau Serge*, and there is about it something of the directness and honesty one might expect from a first novel. A young student (Jean-Claude Brialy), recuperating after an illness, goes to spend the winter in a rough mountain village. He rediscovers his child-

Georges Franju with Juliette Mayniel, star of his new horror film, "Les Yeux sans Visage".



hood friend Serge (Gérard Blain), now fallen into drunkenness and married to a woman (Michèle Meritz) for whom he apparently has no feeling. When he undertakes Serge's "redemption," the result produced is the reverse.

The film's first quality is its truthfulness: Chabrol himself lived as a child in Sardent, the village in the Massif Central where the film was shot. He knew the countryside intimately; he knew how to show the monotony of existence there, the barren land, the unhappiness and loneliness, the occasional beauties of the rockbound landscape. At the same time, he revealed himself as a skilful story-teller.

During the film's first section, for instance, all that happens is that a baker meets a childhood friend on his arrival by bus and carries his suitcase for him up the village street to the inn. The narrative remains dangling in the air. But by means of the simplest words, and some very commonplace images, we have been told everything that matters about the *milieu*, the dramatic situation and the characters. This technical mastery recurs in several sequences, notably that of the village dance which is interrupted by a brawl between Serge and his friend.

Le Beau Serge is simple, straightforward, a film cut out with hatchet blows. *Les Cousins*, in both script and direction, is full of cunning craftsmanship. Here the situation is analogous to that of the earlier film, although the Parisian (Brialy) and the countryman (Blain), both now live in Paris, among a student group rather like that of Carné's *Les Tricheurs*. One may prefer (as I do myself) the roughness of *Le Beau Serge* to the greater brio of *Les Cousins*; and in its last section, especially, the script artifices and suspense tricks become somewhat too apparent. Chabrol's film shows the state of mind of some well-off, carefree students, with a background of the troubles springing from the war and from Hitlerism. The pitiful Mephistopheles who leads this *danse macabre*, for instance, has feelings of race hatred which are repeatedly stressed. But the significance of all this remains a little vague, although the film certainly underlines the fact of Chabrol's talent. Commercially, its success has been considerable.

Another of the *Cahiers* group, François Truffaut has made himself known since 1950 as a young critic ardent in temperament, strongly argumentative, and sometimes unjust in his fierce prejudices. Before this, though, when he was only fourteen, Truffaut found himself in a reform school as a result of some minor misdemeanour. It was through the vigilant friendship of the late André Bazin that he was released from this children's prison and helped to get over an experience which had been a violent shock to him. His *Les Quatre Cents Coups* is autobiographical, a reconstruction of this unhappy adventure. Truffaut had already made a start in the cinema with the dazzling but clumsy *Les Mistons*; now

"*Les Cousins*": Juliette Mayniel, Jean-Claude Brialy, Gérard Blain.



François Truffaut at work on "*Les Quatre Cents Coups*".

his first feature shows him as a master, and there were people at Cannes who thought it deserved the Grand Prix.

This story of a lonely child, misunderstood and victimised by parents and teachers, could easily have become melodrama. The socially critical elements might have slipped away, and the script might have followed certain French *films noirs* of the early 1950s—an expression of disgusted contempt for man as irrevocably corrupt. In fact, the film is of quite a different kind. Truffaut has several times claimed as his masters and exemplars the Balzac of *La Comédie Humaine* and the Renoir of *La Marseillaise*. "I am surprised myself," he has said, "at the importance I attach to the social characterisation of their people."

The parents of his young hero are not only shown against their home background—a crowded little flat where they live uncomfortably and at painfully close quarters. Truffaut has also placed them in a social setting. And he has not pushed the characterisation too far: if they behave atrociously towards their own child, these are still from some viewpoints worthy people, victims like the child himself of a failure of understanding.

The dialogue, written by Truffaut and Marcel Moussy, is as straightforward as the direction. No acrobatic explorations in the set-ups or camera movements: the screen is simply a window opened on life, and the artist looks first for the true and the natural. This concern for reality, though, has led him inevitably towards poetry. Through the marvellous location camerawork by Henri Decae (who also photographed both of Chabrol's films), the commonplace backgrounds of Pigalle, the Place Clichy, the Rue Blanche, where the lost and desperate child wanders, become in themselves a lyrical element in the film. The last scene, in which the boy runs away and goes to look for the sea, is a bravura piece of filming, but made less so in that it is preceded by a sequence of almost documentary exactitude, when the child uses his own words to answer questions put to him by a psychiatrist.

Generosity and real goodwill animate this harsh and moving film. Whether or not its creator wholly intended this, it seems first and foremost a criticism directed against certain *petit bourgeois* attitudes to life, against the meanness of its prejudices and its deeply-rooted inhumanity. And in this sense *Les Quatre Cents Coups* goes beyond the stage of simple autobiography, reminiscences of an unhappy childhood. It makes one think—apart from the influences Truffaut has himself named—of Vigo's *Zéro de Conduite* or of Jules Vallès' *L'Enfant*.

A NEW MOVEMENT

WITH HIS FIRST FEATURE, Truffaut has leapt to the front of his generation—of those film-makers in their twenties who

include Chabrol, Vadim, Louis Malle, Agnès Varda, Claude Bernard-Aubert, and perhaps those of his friends, young artists like Jacques Rivette and J. F. Pollet, whose first features we are still awaiting. This is not to mention those documentarists who have yet to tackle feature direction, whose shorts equal or surpass the films by Edmond Séchan and Raymond Vogel which were justly prized at Cannes.

Alexandre Astruc, Jacques Baratier, Claude Bernard-Aubert, Marcel Camus, Claude Chabrol, Georges Franju, Pierre Kast, Ado Kyrrou, Louis Malle, Chris Marker, Alain Resnais, Jacques Rivette, Jean Rouch, François Truffaut, Agnès Varda, Roger Vadim... Counting up those newcomers who began or showed their first features during the 1958-59 season, or who gave us work confirming earlier promise, one could easily assemble twenty names. And this sudden advance already constitutes a major event in the history of the French cinema. The disturbing artistic stagnation which ruled the years 1955-1957 is over. The new movement is transforming and renewing French cinema, despite the economic and other problems which still have inevitably to be faced.

If we group these newcomers under some general heading like "the 1960 generation" or "the young Paris school," we are really falling back—as with that expression *nouvelle vague* so dear to the press—on establishing the fact of a new movement without attempting to explain its cause or look into its spirit.

It is not easy, however, to disentangle the preoccupations these new film-makers have in common, as evidenced in their work. One can say that they are clearly less concerned with social comment, with the battle fought on non-aesthetic grounds, than were their elders either of 1935 or 1945. It would be misleading, though, to restrict their contribution only to a search for new brands of screen art. Their "aestheticism" or "formalism" is rather less striking than it might

appear at first glance; and social concern certainly plays its part in their work. Will it stamp their films more firmly in future? Might they develop to give a sort of collective view of contemporary society comparable to that provided by Renoir in the 'thirties, or by the neo-realist cinema of 1945-55? We have to wait for an answer to that question.

Is French neo-romanticism going to prove the successor to that Italian neo-realism which was so much the most fruitful of all the Western cinema's post-war movements? This question was posed earlier in the year by the weekly magazine *Les Lettres Françaises*. But the answers given by a dozen of the leading young film-makers, either in their statements or in their work, still leave us guessing.

In fact, the most striking thing remains the differences of tone and temperament among these directors. They seem very remote from each other—the burning sharpness of Resnais, Chabrol's penetrating good humour, Truffaut's harsh generosity, the confused polemics of Bernard-Aubert, the vibrant colourfulness of Marcel Camus, Baratier's refined lyricism, Franju's tender cruelties, the inspired oddities of Chris Marker, the passionate humanism of Jean Rouch, the keen vision of Louis Malle, the individual humour of Agnès Varda, or Alexandre Astruc's delicately poised uncertainties...

All the same, these film-makers seem to have in common that lyricism which is an essential feature of romanticism. At twenty, Victor Hugo energetically refused to let himself be called a "romantic." But the road of his romanticism led him later from hymns to the legitimacy of Charles X's government, to his exile among the rocks of Guernsey. Which of this new generation might follow a similar road? It is another unanswerable question. But the whole issue of neo-romanticism as the sequel to neo-realism has, I feel, been raised; and the near future is likely to make clear to us the accuracy—or otherwise—of the description.

Jean Rouch's "Moi'un Noir".



NEW YORK LETTER:

Towards a spontaneous cinema

by JONAS MEKAS

Jonas Mekas is editor of the American magazine Film Culture. This article is a report from the inside, as it were, on new trends in the non-Hollywood American cinema.

"NO ILLUSIONS!" I wrote in capital letters to friends in New York, "there are no young American film-makers. We must do it ourselves; nobody will do it for us . . ." It was thus that, two years ago, we started our first feature production, *Sunday Junction*, with Edouard de Laurot directing and Adolphus Mekas assisting. Unfortunately, because of insufficient funds and constant bickering with the police, the film was interrupted before the first half was completed. The full story of *Sunday Junction* will be told at a proper occasion. What I want to say now is that today, two years later, my opinion concerning a young generation in American cinema has changed considerably: today I wouldn't deny its existence, and certainly not in capital letters.

The "new American wave" is not yet as accomplished a body of film-makers as its equivalent in France; but it is undeniably on its way. The perfectionists and those who look at cinema from an historical point of view, always turning their heads backwards, unable to see or sense the new rhythms, will challenge me. Nevertheless, the young American cinema is not only here but, considering what we have seen of it already, it differs radically and angrily from the official, now middle-aged generation of American directors who became known during the 'fifties—Robert Aldrich, Nicholas Ray, Samuel Fuller, Martin Ritt, etc. Whereas the Aldrich generation represented an extension of what already existed, these new film-makers are entering upon the cinematic scene with an open contempt for Hollywood, searching for new and



personal approaches, trying to grasp more firmly the rhythms of their generation. At this stage, their formulation of a correct attitude towards cinema is more important than the actual results achieved. If a genuine attitude does develop, it may eventually lead us out of the impasse into which the professionalists have taken us.

The new American cinema is coming from several directions. First, in a most primitive way, via the so-called Grade-B films—juvenile melodramas, thrillers, science fiction films—some produced independently and others backed by the major companies. These are the innocent, unconscious rebels; new actors, new writers, new directors are exploring their craft in these films. Gavin Lambert in the Spring issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND* described a few of them (*Cry Baby Killer*, *Hot Car Girl*, *The Party Crashers*). There are dozens of others, films such as *Cry Tough* (by Paul Stanley), *The Delinquents* (Robert Altman), *High School Big Shot* (Joel M. Rapp), *T-Bird Gang* (Richard Harbinger), *Stakeout on Dope Street* (Irvin Kershner), *The Case Against Brooklyn* (Paul Wendkos), *Crime and Punishment U.S.A.* (Denis and Terry Sanders). In each of them there are sequences and bits and scenes that are more original, more up-to-date in their feeling, and more dynamic than anything in the "official" cinema of *Anatomy of a Murder* or *Middle of the Night*. New faces, new locations are being explored, new themes and new relationships; often, the films have a compelling, contemporary, young quality. Although full of plot and character clichés, and primitive in their techniques, they nevertheless represent the most lively films coming (directly or indirectly) from Hollywood.

The second group, the true independents, the conscious rebels, reject any compromise. If their films are limited in originality or depth, it is only because they are themselves primitive artists. But they make their films with their own money or with the help of friends and make them the way they really want to make them, paying little attention to the distributors or theatres. I have in mind people like Lionel Rogosin (*On the Bowery*, *Come Back, Africa*); Morris Engel (*Little Fugitive*, *Lovers and Lollipops*, *Weddings and Babies*); John Cassavetes (*Shadows*); Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie (*Pull My Daisy*); Edward Bland (*The Cry of Jazz*); and the film poems of Stanley Brakhage. Financially, these films seldom cost more than \$50,000 for a feature and \$3,000 for a short. *Shadows*, although a feature, did not even go beyond \$20,000, and a great part of the money for completing it came from free donations after an appeal by Jean Shepherd on his radio programme called "Night People."

Though made by directors of different ages and temperaments, all these films reveal an open ear and an open eye for timely, contemporary reality. They are similar in other respects: in their use of actual locations and direct lighting; their disrespect for plots and written scripts; their use of improvisation. And since their most passionate obsession is to capture life in its most free and spontaneous flight, "to grasp life from within and not from without" (Suzuki) by loosening the sensibilities, these films could be described as a *spontaneous cinema*. This direction is intimately linked with the general feeling in other areas of life and art: with the ardour for rock and roll; the interest in Zen Buddhism; the development of abstract expressionism (action painting); the emergence of spontaneous prose and New Poetry—all a



"Shadows" : John Cassavetes (left) on location with his unit.

long-delayed reaction against puritanism and the mechanisation of life.

Shadows, finished a year ago and screened here for a few midnight shows at the Paris Theatre, became a sensation overnight. But the film is still without a distributor (as is Morris Engel's *Weddings and Babies*). Distributors insisted on reshooting it in a more conventional and commercial manner.

We know Cassavetes as an actor. In this film he proves to be a most sensitive director. The film itself is almost plotless, and was shot without a script. Primarily, it is a series of improvisations describing a few incidents in the life of a Negro family and a young Negro, in the New York nights. Since most of the film takes place at night, it has the texture of dark lonely streets, bars and neon lights. Through improvisations and outbursts of feeling, the film slowly builds up and grows, without any sense of imposed force, and simultaneously an image of the city emerges, with its downtown nights and its night people. The inner feeling of the city, the tender love quarrels, the loneliness of a young Negro with an almost white skin, are all forcefully revealed to us. The success of *Shadows* is partly due to the talent of Ben Carruthers, who plays the lonely, sensitive youth—a character that grew from a short paragraph, all that there was of the script concerning his part:

"BENNY. He is driven by the uncertainty of his colour, to beg acceptance in this white man's world. Unlike his brother Hugh, or Janet, he has no outlet for his emotions. He has been spending his life trying to decide what colour he is. Now that he has chosen the white race as his people, his problem remains acceptance. This is difficult, knowing that he is in a sense betraying his own. His life is an aimless struggle to prove something abstract, his everyday living has no outlet, and so he moves with . . ." (Here the script ends.) . . . So he moves across the darkly lit downtown streets of New York, with his expressive lean body and childlike innocence, searching for warmth, mimicking, singing to him-

Opposite Page : "Pull My Daisy". Allen Ginsberg, Robert Frank, Peter Orlovsky and Gregory Corso at work on "the first truly beat film . . ."



Forms of experiment : left, Morris Engel's "Lovers and Lollipops" ; right, Irvin Kershner's "Stakeout on Dope Street".

self "Mary had a little lamb," and leaning in the corner of a rock and roll dance-hall.

The film begins in the middle and ends in the middle: nothing much is changed or resolved. But this casual, fragmentary quality is precisely why it seems so convincing, so spontaneous, and so contemporary.

Pull My Daisy is a free improvisation of a scene from an unproduced play by Jack Kerouac; like *Shadows*, it was shot without a script. Nothing much happens in this film. It is a "beat" documentary-comedy about an evening at the place of a young Greenwich Villager who is being visited by some poet friends, and by a young "Bishop" of some unidentifiable church. There are the poets themselves, Gregory Corso, Allen Ginsberg, Peter Orlovski, talking and going through a series of wild improvisations; the Bishop's mother playing the organ, and his sister blowing the bellows. They talk, drink beer, play trumpet, talk again . . .

Robert Frank and Alfred Leslie have said in a statement: "The intention . . . was to create a situation whereby one might comply with James Agee's tender request: 'The films I most eagerly look forward to will not be documentaries but works of pure fiction, played against and into and in collaboration with unrehearsed and uninvented reality.' *Pull My Daisy* is an accumulation rather than a selection of images. It was made by non-professionals in search of that freer vision . . ."

Here is the first truly "beat" film, in the sense that beat is an expression of the young generation's unconscious rejection of the middle-class way, the business man's way; an outburst of spontaneity and improvisation as an unconscious opposition to the mechanisation of life. It also expresses the very concrete influence of Zen Buddhism on the young American intellectuals. The film itself resembles a Zen *koan*: approached logically, it is meaningless and absurd. It is not a film of action or logical statements: it is a portrait of inner feelings. This is Zen on film, and it is a thoroughly serious film despite its apparent robe of nonsense.

The makers of this film are themselves the new, beat American intellectuals. Robert Frank was until now known only as a still photographer. His series of disturbingly revealing photographs of Hollywood, recently published in

Esquire magazine, created a sensation here; his book *Les Américains* came out last Autumn in Paris and Rome, after being rejected by publishers here as anti-American. Now, with the publicity that the film is getting, the book is finally being brought out by Grove Press in New York. Alfred Leslie is one of the leading American abstract expressionists, whose paintings are travelling throughout Europe in recent American shows.

One of the most exciting features of the film is its sound track. The picture was shot silent and Jack Kerouac speaks for all the characters, also commenting freely on their actions. During the recording of the commentary, Kerouac spoke the lines of each actor without any preparation or a previous viewing of the film—he just went on, as the images went by, in a sort of drunken trance; and his commentary has the immediacy and magic of such an improvisation.

Stanley Brakhage's short film poem, *Desistfilm*, employs all the techniques of a spontaneous cinema. It describes a wild party held by a group of youths, with all their youthful exhibitionism, adolescent games and adolescent love images, and was shot in one evening at a real improvised party with a 16mm. camera, most of the time hand-held, following every movement wildly and nervously and without any prescribed or planned techniques. *Desistfilm* perfectly re-creates the mood and tempo of the party, with all its little details of foolish, silly, marginal actions, its outbursts of adolescent emotional violence. The camera gets everywhere, never intruding, never interfering; it moves into psychological close-ups and follows the restless youths in fast, jerky tilts and pans. There seems a perfect unity here of subject matter, camera movement, and the temperament of the film-maker himself. The free flight of life has been caught, and the film has vitality, rhythm, and also the temperament of a poem by Rimbaud, of a naked confession—all improvisation, with no artist's hand visible, though at the same time the distance between reality and art is established.

Lionel Rogosin's *Come Back, Africa* follows in the direction of *On the Bowery*, with its sketchy background plot, its documentary style, on the spot improvisations and tradition of "simplistic" or "emotional" humanism. Secretly made in Johannesburg, under the pretext of shooting a musical, this

is a most impressive exposition on film of conditions in South Africa. At the same time it is a satire on African whites, on their attitudes towards natives. Since Rogosin is not an intellectual, the strongest moments are again the improvised scenes, like the one showing a discussion among a group of Negroes in a small, closed room, executed with straight television technique, or the scenes of Negro musicians in the streets. Carl Lerner's editing helps greatly in establishing the film's clear and simple rhythms. This is a more mature work than *On the Bowery*, though a certain self-consciousness is still present. Like *On the Bowery* it balances between improvisation and a consciously imposed plot, perhaps unavoidable in a message-protest film.

2

The American documentary has been dead for two decades now. For years we have been exposed to bloodless industrial or sales documentaries. Rogosin's coming into American cinema with his "emotional humanism" can open a new period. Some recent short films also continue to explode the old, pallid documentary myth; and often in a more radical, more conscious manner than that of Rogosin.

One such documentary is *Have I Told You Lately*, produced by the cinema department of the University of Southern California and directed by Stuart Hanish. In tight, highly condensed images it describes a day in the life of an American middle-class family, surrounded by the machines, gadgets and impersonal offices that consume their time and leave them empty-handed. The film scathingly suggests the loneliness, the banality, the mechanisation. There is no obvious propagandising here: a poetical accumulation of actual details creates a feeling of that horror which Henry Miller described in *The Air-Conditioned Nightmare*, or Allen Ginsberg in his recent article in the *San Francisco Chronicle* (July 29th, 1959): "... a vast national subconscious nether-world filled with nerve gases, universal death bombs, malevolent bureaucracies, secret police systems, drugs that open the door to God, ships leaving Earth, unknown chemical terrors, evil dreams at hand."

But the documentary that breaks most sharply away from the general, official line is Edward Bland's *The Cry of Jazz*. This makes a complete about-face in American documentary, from a passive, objective, democratic or "simplistic humanist"

approach to a personal, passionate, active one. It is an essay film, with all visual material and commentary subjugated to proving and illustrating an idea. The closest we ever came to this kind of film was in our wartime documentaries. Produced by a group of young Negro intellectuals and artists in Chicago, *The Cry of Jazz* describes the condition of the Negro today through the history and character of jazz. Bland takes a very categorical stand: that jazz is an expression of the American Negro; that the Negro, because of his long suffering, was able to retain more of the tragic-emotional richness than the American white; and that jazz is now dead, because the Negro is entering the stage of a more conscious, confident acceptance of himself. All this is stated not in logical expressions but in passionate outbursts, without leaving much freedom for debate. It is said with a sort of philosophical anger, as though by one who has finally lost all patience with explanation. Parts of it look like clever propaganda, almost reminiscent of the Nazi anti-Jewish films, presenting shots of Negro slums, replete with cockroaches, rats and broken windows, contrasted with the luxury of the whites. It takes one who knows the new Negro intellectual to understand that this is not propaganda: it is only a cry held too long in the throat, a delayed reaction some hundred years old.

Because of its open anger, *The Cry of Jazz* is in a certain sense out of tune with the general mood of the beat generation white artists. But we can find the same note of uncontrolled philosophical anger in Allen Ginsberg's poetry. And it was Ginsberg who wrote a devastating indictment of society in the article already quoted, in which he accuses our public arts: "These media are exactly the places where the deepest and most personal sensitivities and confessions of reality are most prohibited, mocked, suppressed."

Let us be frank: if Hollywood films seem boring and outdated, it is not because our "geniuses" are being kept away from the cinema; nor because the scripts are being ruined by producers, etc. The truth is more simple: what we see is their finest work at the top of their intelligence.

The new generation is coming with a different kind of intelligence: an inner intelligence. At least, they are searching for it. And this eventually may be their contribution. It seems almost impossible even to begin explaining the difference between free, spontaneous film and the contrived, "serious," official cinema to our professional, official film-makers, critics and audiences. Because the reason for the lifelessness of "official" cinema is society itself, which is going through a transitional, decadent period... The question is one of loosening the frozen sensibilities, of weeding out anachronistic moral, social and political clichés, the false authorities, the false purposes of life. This process is taking place. And the new generation of film-makers is governed by the feelings and winds of this transitional period. To the beat and Zen-intellectuals in America, it seems very clear that the way of life, the aims and purposes, of the previous generation have betrayed them. And when you don't any longer know where and what the essence is, the surest way—if there is any way at all—is to throw away all inhibitions and lose oneself completely in the spontaneous improvisations that lead into the inner regions of our being: where, after all, everything rests.

"Come Back Africa":
Lionel Rogosin.



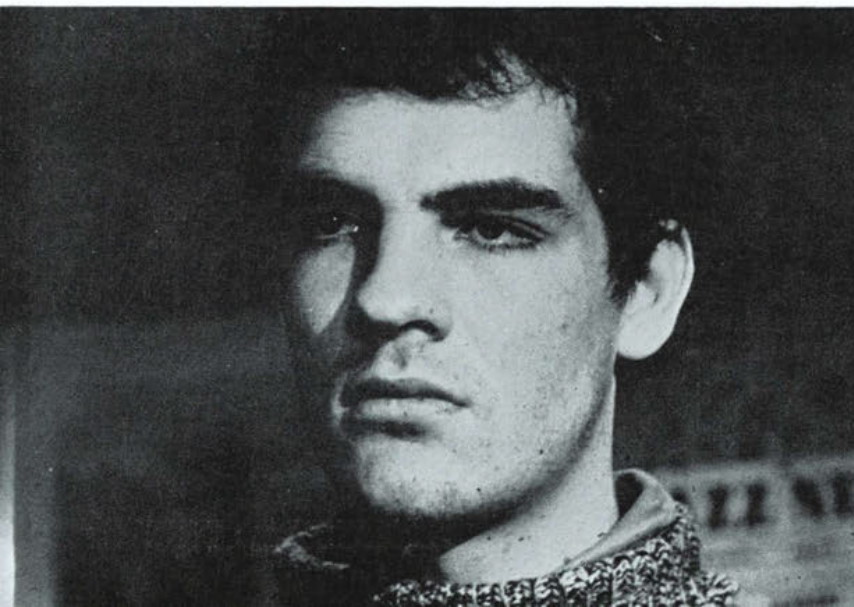


LOOK BACK



IN ANGER

by DAVID ROBINSON



IT IS JUST OVER three years since *Look Back in Anger* happened. There is no point at this stage in recalling just what it meant in this country, socially as well as theatrically. *Fool's Paradise* or not, the English theatre is a little different, simply because a contemporary play has explored a contemporary state of mind. And Jimmy Porter belongs to the culture of the 'fifties, typifying the malaise and frustration of a generation conceived out of decades of turmoil, the people whose roots are left bare and vulnerable in the disturbed topsoil of Victorian social organisation.

Jimmy is part of our culture. The play was so powerful, so exactly of its time, that it has swept us on, far beyond the grouchy and bewildered press notices of May 9th, 1956. John Osborne is rich now, and Jimmy Porter is his own establishment. Just because *Look Back in Anger* and the discussion which surrounded it carried us forward so far, the play is now itself a thing of the past. It had to be so, because it was so firmly rooted in its moment. The Porters have marched to Aldermaston and back since then: they are in a new stage of development. The Jimmies of 1959 are as different from the Jimmies of 1956 as *they* were from the Denton Welch generation.

The film of *Look Back in Anger* had to reflect something of this change, to shift its emphases, or to die before it ever emerged. It could not have the breathtaking impact of the play's first appearance; but it has still contemporaneity, exhilaration, excitement. And it owes them not just to Osborne's rich and eruptive dialogue, but to its own inherent merits.

The adaptation is by Nigel Kneale, who has discovered a shape and coherence which were not always obvious in the original. For instance, in the play Jimmy is inclined to fire off into a theme or speech with no apparent motive; and though this is in the strict sense life-like, dramatically it is often difficult and apparently unrealistic. Such an unmotivated speech was Jimmy's address to Helena about his father's death, beginning "Have you watched somebody die?" By shifting this from its original position (where it was an excrescent gloss upon Jimmy's background) to follow the telephone call which tells Jimmy that Ma Tanner is dying, the adaptation makes it serve a triple purpose. While still adding to what we know of Jimmy ("I learnt at an early age what it is to be angry"), it follows logically in the dialogue sequence; it prepares us for the extent to which Jimmy will suffer from Ma's death; and it gives emphasis to Alison's inadequacy in choosing this precise moment to walk out. (One recalls her line in the play: "I'm afraid a sense of timing is one of the things I've learnt from Jimmy".)

There are a number of shifts of this sort, most of them designed to take the film out of doors, into the market and jazz club. There are omissions, too; and it is significant that these are mostly speeches which gave us insight into Jimmy's background, tastes and problems as a child of his time. We no longer hear about Madeline or Hugh Tanner, or about Jimmy's marriage and sub-

Above: Richard Burton; centre: Claire Bloom and Mary Ure; below: Gary Raymond. These images are taken from the same sequence—shots eleven, nine and ten in the script extract on page 124.

sequent war on W.1., S.W.1., S.W.3. and W.8. We do not hear about the University which was less red brick than white tile. We lose a lot of his personal opinions—about Sunday papers and queers and noisy women, for example. There are things we do not learn about Alison either—how deeply Ma Tanner admired her, how she feels about Cliff, how desperately Jimmy looks to her for the “enthusiasm” of which she is incapable, so that he welcomes Helena as “a good enemy.”

The shifts, the cuts, the abridgements have subtly changed the emphasis of the whole piece. The theme is no longer primarily a *mal-de-siècle*; *Look Back in Anger* is now much more concerned with class enmities on the one hand; on the other it has become much more a personal drama. The class question was, of course, fundamental to Jimmy's situation in the play; but it was never so emphatic as here. Jimmy's resentment of Alison and her class is not so great as the market superintendent's resentment of Jimmy, because Jimmy is educated and independent—“cocky.” The inability of Daddy and Cliff to meet and talk on equal terms, even though each is impelled by complete honesty and good will, becomes much more apparent when it is seen on the screen.

This class intolerance is extended, rather awkwardly, to race intolerance. The introduction of Johnny Kapoor, the Indian stall-holder, is one of the least satisfactory aspects of the film. He looks like a rather clumsy device to express the suspicion of both middle classes (Alison) and working classes (the market people) towards coloured races. His reply to Jimmy's question, why did he come to this country in the first place, is an uncomfortable moment: “I came because in my own country I was an outcast. An untouchable.” I suspect that this incident was not intended as naively as, in the event, it appears. I think it is an attempt (albeit unsuccessful) to translate into dramatic terms Jimmy's omitted speech about causes (“There aren't any good, brave causes left.”) Here we see Jimmy in action, not just talking about it, but momentarily invigorated by a lost cause which he can embrace.

The tendency to personalise the drama is a more debilitating change. Almost in self-defence as it seems, the film jibes at the play in which Helena is supposed to be acting. Jimmy calls it, sneering, “a penetrating examination of love and personal relationships”; and we are shown a fragment of it—a banal scene of conventional renunciation. It is all the more curious since the ending of the film itself comes dangerously near this at moments. It is true that the last scene of the play, between Jimmy, Alison and Helena, is ambiguous: if the film makes it less so, it is not altogether an improvement. Helena no longer tries to explain her reasons for leaving Jimmy. When she says “I can't take part in all this suffering,” she no longer adds, “You can't be happy when what you're doing is wrong or hurting someone else.” And when Jimmy replies, “It's no good trying to fool yourself about love,” he is no longer recognising Helena's failure, with the lines beginning “They all want to escape from the pain of being alive . . .” We no longer have the same meticulous balancing of the inadequacy of both women; rather the more conventional spectacle of two women in love with one man, the stronger renouncing him to the more righteous. The book of rules is produced, after all.

Is Richard Burton too old for Jimmy? At the time I found his performance so compelling that I did not question his physical suitability. And there is no doubt about his complete psychic absorption in the role. It is true that Burton the actor *always* snarls and scowls and curls his lip; but these are unmistakably the snarls and grimaces of Jimmy Porter. Whether the credit is due more to the director, the actor, or to intelligent casting (which is certainly the case with Claire Bloom's exact and brilliant Helena) it is hard to judge; but this is in any case a performance of the first rank.

One difficulty with Jimmy arises out of the severe cutting of the play's first scene. In the original we had time to learn something of the protagonist's tastes and fears and problems before his worst abuse and eventual assault upon Alison. In the film we first see him in a few short scenes without dialogue (at the jazz club, returning home, going to bed with Alison, getting up the next morning). Then, after a couple of dozen lines of the truncated Sunday-morning brawl, Alison is hurt and Jimmy leaves the flat.

So peremptory a treatment might leave an audience thinking that Jimmy is just a boor—as Helena and some of the play's first critics found him. This is the justification for a new character, Ma Tanner (beautifully played by Edith Evans, who in two brief scenes gives the old lady a completeness and richness we rarely see in our cinema). Ma Tanner is a direct way through to Jimmy such as we lacked in the play. She and Jimmy are in direct contact; they talk to each other simply and easily, without the defences of anger and bitterness which Jimmy interposes between himself and the rest of the world. Ma asks him, “what do you want to do in the world?”; and if his answer, “Everything—nothing” is evasive, it is not because he wants to fox her, but because he can answer nothing else.

The only player from the original stage production is Mary Ure as Alison; and she is perhaps the least satisfactory of the principals. “I'm a conventional girl”: Mary Ure is too strange, too individual in appearance and manner for Alison. Cliff is a difficult role. His position between the husband and wife is ambiguous. Gary Raymond solves the problems by a very simple and direct interpretation; and here, yet again, one feels that the director has greatly simplified his own work by type-casting of the most intelligent and constructive kind.

Look Back in Anger is Tony Richardson's first feature film; and it occasionally betrays inexperience. There are touches of smartness—the ghost trumpet of the opening, the high angle shot as Helena leaves the stage, over-clever image cuts from sequence to sequence, an excessive fondness for dissolves (some of which are very good), gratuitous bits of “social significance,” (like the ruinous faces of the old men whom Jimmy and Helena pass in the park), the picturesque last shot of Jimmy and Alison silhouetted on a railway bridge, surrounded by clouds of smoke and steam.

But these meretricious moments are quite insignificant beside Richardson's whole achievement in developing a style to the purposes of the piece. It is as yet a sometimes strained, intellectual style; but this is no demerit in a cinema where for so long film-making has just been a

(Continued on page 179)

a sequence from **LOOK BACK IN ANGER**

This extract immediately follows a tirade directed by Jimmy Porter at his wife, Alison, and triggered off by Helena Charles' announcement that she and Alison intend to go to church. Infuriated by Jimmy's violence, Helena goes off to prepare for church . . .

1. **Close Shot:** JIMMY. *He turns towards Alison.*
JIMMY: What are you trying to do to me? Trying to twist my arm off with your silence . . .
2. **Medium Close Shot:** ALISON. *She is sitting at the table with her head buried on her arms, but looks up as Jimmy speaks.*
JIMMY: . . . I've given you—I've given you just everything!
3. **Close Shot:** JIMMY.
JIMMY: You Judas! You Phlegm!
4. **Medium Close Shot:** ALISON.
JIMMY: She's taking you with her and you're so bloody wet you let her do it!
Alison turns away, flings the cup she has been holding down on the floor. As it smashes, she turns back to face Jimmy.
ALISON: All I want is a little peace!
5. **Close Shot:** JIMMY. *Camera follows him as he turns towards Cliff, sitting on the other side of the room.*
JIMMY: Peace! She wants peace! One of us is crazy . . . mean and stupid and crazy. Which is it? Is it me standing here like a hysterical girl . . .
6. **Medium Close Shot:** CLIFF. *He is sitting at the table, watching Jimmy.*
JIMMY: . . . hardly able to get my words out . . .
7. **Close Shot:** JIMMY. *During speech he begins to move back across the room, the camera moving with him.*
JIMMY: . . . Or is it her? Sitting there putting on her shoes to go out with that . . . that . . . One of these days you may want to come back. I want to be there that day!
Jimmy is now standing behind Alison, looking down at her as she sits on the bed with her head bent forward.
JIMMY: . . . I want to stand up in your tears, and splash about in them, and sing. I want to be there when you grovel. I want to be there, I want to watch it, I want the front seat. I want to be there when your face is rubbed in the mud. There's nothing else I can hope for any more—there's nothing else I want any more.
Jimmy has spoken with mounting hysteria: he pauses and stands looking down at the still silent Alison. During this speech, Helena has come back into the room.
HELENA'S VOICE: There's a call for you downstairs.
JIMMY: Can't be anything good, can it . . .
The camera moves with Jimmy as he crosses the room, passes Helena, dressed for church, in the doorway, and goes out. Helena turns to look after him.
JIMMY (calls): What is it?
Camera moves with Helena as she turns to Cliff, throws her hat down on the table.
HELENA: God! What's the matter with him now? It's as if you'd done him wrong! . . . You just sit there and do nothing.
CLIFF (looking up): That's right. I just sit here.
HELENA: What sort of a man are you?
CLIFF (getting up): I'm not the district . . .
8. **Close Shot:** CLIFF. *He is now standing. During his speech the noise of church bells is heard, and continues intermittently during the rest of the scene.*
CLIFF: . . . commissioner, you know. Listen, Helena, this has always been a battlefield, and I'm pretty certain that if I hadn't been here everything would have been over between these two long ago . . . I love these two people very much . . . and I pity all of us.
9. **Close Shot:** HELENA.
HELENA: I don't understand you, or him, or any of it.
Camera moves with Helena as she walks over to sit down on the bed beside Alison, then moves in to hold the two girls in a close shot.
HELENA: Listen, Alison, I'm going to call your father tomorrow. I'm going to ask him to come up and fetch you home.
ALISON (slowly): I see.
HELENA: Now, you'll go when he comes for you.
ALISON (after short pause): Yes, I'll go.
HELENA: I expect he should be here by four. Perhaps, after you've gone, Jimmy'll come to his senses and face up to things . . . Well, come on. We'll be late if we don't hurry.
Helena gets up. Alison slowly follows her, the camera moving with her as she crosses the room, pulling on her jacket. She joins Helena at the door and they go out.
10. **Close Shot:** CLIFF. *He looks after them, then turns away.*
11. **Medium Close Shot:** JIMMY at the telephone. *He puts the telephone down and turns as the girls come down the stairs. Helena passes him; Alison stops.*
ALISON: What is it?
JIMMY: Ma Tanner . . . She's had a stroke.
ALISON: Oh—I'm sorry. How bad is she?
JIMMY: They . . . they didn't say much. I think she's dying.
HELENA: Oh, dear.
JIMMY (to Helena): Have you ever seen anybody die?
12. **Close Shot:** HELENA.
HELENA: No, I haven't.
13. **Close Shot:** JIMMY.
JIMMY: For twelve months I watched my father dying . . . when I was ten years old. He'd come back from the war in Spain, you see . . . All my mother could think was that she was married to somebody who was on—on the wrong side in all things . . . Perhaps she pitied him. I was the only one who cared.
14. **Group Shot:** JIMMY, ALISON, HELENA. *Sound of church bells.*
JIMMY: Hour upon hour I sat in that little room . . . He would talk, you know, pour out all that was left of his life to a small, frightened boy who could barely understand half of what he said. All I could feel was the despair and the bitterness, the sweet, sickly smell of a dying man . . . (To Helena) You see, I learnt at an early age what it is to be angry . . . Angry . . . helpless. (He turns to Alison) The train leaves in half an hour . . .
15. **Close Shot:** ALISON.
JIMMY: You're coming with me, aren't you?
16. **Close Shot:** HELENA. *She looks at them, then turns to walk down the passage towards the door.*
17. **Medium Shot:** DOORWAY, *seen from Jimmy's viewpoint. Helena moves down the passage and stands holding the door open. She looks back at Jimmy and Alison.*
18. **Close Shot:** JIMMY. *He looks up at Alison.*
JIMMY: I need you to come with me.
19. **Close Shot:** ALISON. *She looks at Jimmy, then towards Helena at the door.*
20. *As 17. Helena is still holding the door open.*
21. **Close Shot:** ALISON. *She turns back towards Jimmy.*
22. **Medium Close Shot:** JIMMY. *Alison moves past him down the passage.*
23. **Medium Shot:** DOORWAY. *Alison walks towards Helena.*
ALISON: Let's go.
The two girls go out, and the door shuts behind them.
24. **Medium Close Shot:** JIMMY. *He stands for a moment holding the stair rail, then slowly turns to walk up to the flat.*
Quick Dissolve. *On the image of Jimmy climbing the stairs is superimposed that of Ma Tanner in her hospital bed.*
25. **Close Shot:** MA TANNER. *She looks up, tries to speak.*
26. **Medium Close Shot:** JIMMY. *He is sitting by her bed holding a bunch of flowers.*
JIMMY: I—I brought you these.



11



13



14



17



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26

GENE MOSKOWITZ

THE TIGHT CLOSE-UP



Sidney Lumet (left) rehearsing a New York street scene for "That Kind of Woman", with Sophia Loren and Tab Hunter.

THE BRIGHT YOUNG WRITERS of American television are already here. Or, at least, so it seems. In spite of the tyranny of commercial sponsorship demands and the leveling effects of the mass media, new writers have emerged who owe their viewpoints, techniques and attitudes exclusively to television. Now that it has fallen into its general place among the entertainment facets of America, television is accessible for comment. Its claims to be an art form, as well as an industry in its own right, now seem justified in spite of

the immense quantity of mediocre material that still infests the video wavelengths in America and especially in New York, where the many steel crosses have turned the rooftops into mighty kite snares and nine stations vie for audience attention from fifteen to twenty hours a day.

One of the best known among television writers, who has since tried his hand at the theatre and motion pictures, Paddy Chayefsky, once said that "the TV play was the most perishable item known to man." He has since been proved wrong.

Television plays are published in anthologies and transcribed to theatre and films and even into book form. The television writer, after ten short years, is now a highly paid and respected man.

The beginning, according to another highly rated TV writer, Rod Serling, was chaos: the writer was rarely consulted on his work and was as forgotten and unsung as the early film writers. But as television evolved the writer went along with it. The TV critic came into being; and although he reviewed something already seen, he could springboard a writer into prominence, could take a creative hand by singling out the unusual in writing, playing and direction on the live shows created especially for the medium. As television tried for distinction, as the first novelty wore off and viewers began to filter back to other means of entertainment and enlightenment, a more creative element began to make itself felt.

During early TV days, such programmes as the Kraft Theatre, *Danger* and Studio One began to put on original live plays; writers like Serling, Chayefsky, Horton Foote, Bob Aurthur, David Swift and David Shaw emerged as new and varied television talents. The special time consciousness induced by having literally to sandwich a drama or comedy between commercials for cheese, corn plasters or coffee helped to form the type and manner of treatment. Time was always paramount, and writers tried to end each segment, before the commercial spiels, with an "upbeat" dramatic point which would give viewers something to hold on to until the continuation of the story.

The early demands for economy—television's equivalent of the film "quickie" days—also forced TV shows into a certain mould: the unities of time, place and action were observed; the fewer sets the better. The small screen and the home surroundings of the audience were also taken into account, and intimacy became a part of the show. The close-up, somewhat sacrificed in the talking cinema and especially in the big screen era, was brought back and seemed to have even more potency on the small screen. "Tight close-up" appears continuously in most television scripts. Dramatic scenes came to depend on the intricacies of facial expression rather than on editing and the more symbolic devices of the cinema film. The necessity for intimacy led to a sort of "vertical" dramatic method, rather than the horizontal effects used on the cinema screen.

By 1954, when writers like Chayefsky, Reginald Rose, Serling, Gore Vidal and Robert Alan Aurthur had gained eminence and television had become a rich, heady business, the original plays were given the backing of big budgets. More sets could be utilised, allowing for greater fluidity; and television could soon claim the immediacy of the theatre, the flexibility of films and the overall coverage previously held by radio.

Still, when television plays were transferred to the cinema, they were marked by a sort of realism without firm and actual roots in time and place and by a tendency towards melodrama. Without the right expansion, a TV play as a film usually seemed rather too close to the surface in treatment. Yet what television did was to take a new hold on reality, with its comment on important issues of the day, and, in consequence, a firmer stand on morality. The cinema, meanwhile, seemed to be straying in the opposite direction, in its increased emphasis on spectacle, sensation, and a return to comedy which tried to treat of current affairs without having a firm basis in today's needs.

A glance at some recent films by noted Hollywood directors bears this out. Veterans such as Leo McCarey, Frank Capra, Mervyn LeRoy, Frank Borzage, King Vidor and others are now working, in some cases returning to the screen after

several years inaction. McCarey's recent comedy *Rally Round the Flag, Boys* and LeRoy's *Home Before Dark* both make, in their own way, a certain relevant comment on American film trends and treatment of today. Walt Disney's new multi-million dollar animated film *The Sleeping Beauty* could be added to this short list.

McCarey's film attempts to renew the great pre-war tradition of situation comedy, in a story about a hard-working young man whose wife's devotion to small-town social and committee work makes inroads on their private life. Things reach a climax when the army sets up a secret missile base in the town, and the wife naturally finds herself leading the citizens' protest, while the hero is being pursued by a neighbour's beautiful and neglected young wife. The subjects (rocket bases, small town tensions) are topical, but the film covers up the genuine anxieties behind them and emerges as old-fashioned, out of keeping with the true spirit of the times. Depression comedies, for instance, never hid the depression but showed that resilience in the American spirit which could overcome it. LeRoy's *Home Before Dark*, about a girl who is thought insane after a nervous breakdown brought on by her husband's weakness and latent desire for her sister, seems equally out of touch. Here insanity is used simply as a device, and the result is like the old-style films of Joan Crawford without their inventiveness and creation of myth. Walt Disney, finally, spent millions to make his 75 minute film—and made it practically indistinguishable from his *Snow White* of twenty years ago. The techniques are superior, but the familiar naive moralising pervades the film. Scenes of the evil witch's castle and some metamorphoses, however, give glimpses of the marvellous things that could be done: the amazing technical abilities displayed in this film could make a Dante's *Inferno*...

2

It is against this Hollywood background that television's contribution should be measured. The so-called spurt of "free" television writing was and remains hampered by the sponsor, through the say of the advertising agencies (Madison Avenue) in subject matter and content. Although this has not wholly prevented television plays from treating important



Paddy Chayefsky (left) with Kim Stanley and John Cromwell on the set of "The Goddess".



Anthony Perkins as the young baseball player in Robert Mulligan's "Fear Strikes Out".

subjects, it has to some extent blunted their impact. A television code, similar to the Motion Picture Code and even more stringent, is also in force. Some examples of sponsor influence on video scripts seem in order here.

Rod Serling some years ago was influenced by the Emmet Till case, in which two white men killed a Negro boy in Mississippi and were exonerated by local courts. He wrote a play in which a small town community banded together to protect one of their own, even if some thought the crime was wrong. Called *Noon on Doomsday*, the play first concerned an old Jewish pawnbroker who was murdered by a neurotic malcontent. Its theme was that of the scapegoat used to rationalise personal or national shortcomings. But a newspaper story linking the play to the Till case soon led to repercussions: although the play had different characters, fear of offending the South resulted in drastic changes. Eventually, the Jew became an unnamed foreigner and the killer was just a good American boy who had a moment of derangement. The locale was transferred to New England and nothing in any way Southern was allowed. (Even a bottle of Coca-Cola was removed from the script on the assumption that it was associated with the South—the "Georgia cracker" breakfast of Coca-Cola and an aspirin, no doubt.)

Reginald Rose's *Thunder on Sycamore Street* was originally about a group of seemingly proper citizens who take the law into their own hands to drive a Negro family from their street, since they fear the values of the street, both social and economic, will go down. In the event, the man who is almost driven out by the mob became an ex-criminal—and one who had served a prison sentence due to an accident, at that.

In spite of these examples, the young television writers have been tackling immediate and important problems. Racism, justice, old age versus youth, "brainwashing," the moral anguish of power in war and its consequences, a man's facing up to his boss for his own self-esteem and respect, have been some themes incorporated in this new writing crucible of the television system. Though some of the forthrightness has of necessity been muffled, these writers are still giving a much

needed vitality to a mass medium of expression in their treatment of significant themes which call for a moral stand. Although the transference of such TV subjects to the cinema screen was a shortlived affair—the public accepted it at first (*Marty*) and then showed a disaffection for it—television influences did begin to develop a form of cinema dealing with vital subjects alongside the bigger-budgeted spectacles and star vehicles.

Among television dramas regarded as most representative of this school have been such plays as Serling's *Patterns* (filmed as *Patterns of Power*), about the moral aspects of power in big business. Youth versus old age was another theme. But the play tended to come to pat judgments and even to condone the very thing it had been attacking. An older man is literally destroyed by a cold, efficient boss who wants him out of the way so that he can take on a younger man. The latter tries to stand up to the boss but seemingly compromises, and it is not clear whether the theme is that the system always wins or that it can be changed by youth and courage. Serling's *The Rack* and *Strike* treat of moral crises during war. In *The Rack* some moral hedging is also apparent, since Serling himself has said that a man's condemnation by the army for surrender to "brainwashing" is an expedient verdict but not ill-conceived. In the play, this point of view is not so evident. The "have your cake and eat it" attitude shows up quite frequently on television.

Other writers have treated simpler themes of self-realisation, as in Horton Foote's *A Young Lady of Property*, in which an adolescent girl learns to understand her father, Tad Mosel's *My Lost Saints*, wherein a simple servant girl realises how she is being used both by her employers and by her own mother, and J. P. Martin's *The Rabbit Trap*, about a man who quits the boss who has exploited him and so regains his own self-esteem and his son's respect. In Robert Alan Aurthur's *Man on the Mountain-top*, an attempt is made to study the effect of parental love and an over-emphasis on learning on a bright young man. In Gore Vidal's *Visit to a Small Planet* and Serling's *Old MacDonald Had a Curve*, the approach is one of satirical comedy.

And what about that thing called "love"? It is treated on American TV usually in the slick, traditional way, which is with a modicum of suggestion and a definite moral chastity. Love is usually of the pure awakening kind (*Marty*); it may be hinted at in its darker nature (*Bachelor Party*); but there is little treatment of the passion itself. Lovers are usually in the talking and kissing stages, or are already married with the physical sublimated to the companionable aspects. Perhaps it is thought that the small screen image, mainly received at home, calls for discretion in the depiction of physical love. At any rate it has yet to be treated profoundly, though a most



A jury-room confrontation in "Twelve Angry Men".

popular programme was concerned with a young, nubile girl preparing for bed in a diaphanous nightgown. (However, there was no man in sight here.) The main use of "love" is in its power to make a man act out of respect for his loved one or out of a desire to gain her respect. But the intimacies, in spite of the intimacy of the medium, are as yet taboo.

3

Television attitudes are directly and indirectly affecting cinema and theatre, just as television itself has been influenced by them. Many of the TV-trained writers, it should be pointed out, have now themselves moved away to the theatre or to more lucrative work in films, despite the fact that there they may also be subject to front-office pressures. There are only a few programmes left on TV nowadays that specialise in live, original dramas.

Meanwhile young directors from TV have branched off into film work, and it is from them that TV's influence on films has mainly come. During a recent trip to New York there was a chance to interview three of these directors, John Frankenheimer, Sidney Lumet and Robert Mulligan, all aged around thirty, and all established in the cinema through arresting first films. All three had started their directorial work in television but had always had film ambitions. But they have no intention of abandoning television and would like to keep up TV work combined with film and theatre direction. In France some film-makers, like Jean Renoir and René Clair, do stage productions, but this is usually only a passing fancy. In America this new crop have definite careers in all these media and are studying the fusion of all three to aid all three.

John Frankenheimer is tall, handsome, tense-looking, with a firm purpose and keen intelligence in conversation. He had tried acting himself but was, as he put it, "very bad." He learned about film-making in the army and felt that this was what he wanted to do; but when he went to Hollywood he failed to land even a third assistant director's job. Then, through a friend, he became Sidney Lumet's assistant on a television show which he took over when Lumet left. Here he distinguished himself among television's younger creators. Then he made his first film, *The Young Stranger*, which was well received critically but has never satisfied him. The reason, he said, was that he found the director of photography, an old-timer, was saying "no" to too many of the things he wanted to do. Things that he had done easily on television were regarded as impossible by the Hollywood expert. So he finally gave in, made the film simply, and remains dissatisfied with it.

He argues that television has an immediacy in its development of character and story, whilst in cinema the scope is larger and the characters have to be fitted in with more sense of their environment and background. Yet television leaves a margin for experiment during the very direction, since the action is continuous and actors can build with the action. So performance, scripting and point of view have become to him an essential of the TV tiny screen values. If he could transcribe all this to film, and still manage to achieve the cinema values of size, movement, and a pace developing through the characters and theme, he feels that he would have arrived as both a film and a television director.

Interrupted by subdued shouting at an intrusive telephone operator, Frankenheimer made it clear that although he cannot choose all his scripts for TV, he tries to pick those which fit in with his own conception of life. Because of the constant flow of material and assignments, most promising TV directors take any subject and try to do the best they can with it: this sometimes shows amazing versatility but clouds, he feels, that necessary personal view of life which has been part of the contribution of most film "greats." In broad terms, Frankenheimer maintained that in his dramas on television he wants to show man developing his standards and values in life through a feeling of his own and others' mortality. All



"The Young Stranger": John Frankenheimer with James MacArthur, who played the lead in this study of teenage discontent.

characters, even if flawed and brutal, have value, so that their lives and deaths are not merely incidents in a play but matters of moment.

Frankenheimer some months ago tried to apply this principle to his three-hour version of Hemingway's *For Whom the Bell Tolls*, which was television's first three-hour drama and was shown in two parts during successive weeks. This, he said, was intended as a microscopic view of war—not just of the Spanish Civil War, but of all wars. He wanted to give his production a "stylised reality," whereas on film he would have tried to make the same statement through a true, bigger view of war. "In the final analysis, the love of one human being for another is the only valid factor worth dying for." That is what he wants to show in his work.

For his next film, Frankenheimer wants to do a book that recently impressed him called *Death of a Man*. In this, a woman writer told of her last days with her husband while he was dying of cancer, of the way that, knowing this, they both tried to live out these remaining days with all their love of life and each other. To Frankenheimer, this is not a morbid case history but a reaffirmation of life. He would like to make the film in the South of France, where the last days of the couple were spent.

Sidney Lumet is small, spectacled, and extremely youthful and talkative in a fast, piercing way. I met him in his apartment, tasteful if somewhat over-decorative and hung with portraits of his wife, the millionaire heiress Gloria Vanderbilt, who has herself done some acting of late. This setting seemed somewhat remote from the terser aspects of *Twelve Angry Men*, though more in keeping with Lumet's second film, *Stage Struck*. Lumet comes from a family of actors and was one himself, which may explain his fondness for decoration. But he is completely a director, for television and films and with some theatre projects in the offing.

As he fidgeted or walked about among his fine paintings and some fluffy but pleasing furnishings, he made it clear that he can work only in a so-called "white heat," that his form of inspiration is the energy generated by continuous, dynamic work. It is a method particularly applicable to television, where a run through of a piece can be done almost in its entirety, or to a concentrated film like *Twelve Angry Men*. He feels, though, that he can also work at high tension in the cinema provided he has a good pre-rehearsal period.

Lumet said that *Stage Struck* suffered from inadequacies in Susan Strasberg's performance, but was to him a personal bow to the theatre he loved. He wants to make more films but has no intention, he says, of going to Hollywood. Recently he finished a film with Sophia Loren, *That Kind of Woman*, also shot in New York but sent to Hollywood for scoring and re-cutting. In the process he feels it lost the simplicity and feeling he wanted to give it, that its story of two people who finally realise that love comes before pride and silly prejudice has dwindled to little more than a melodrama. Lumet's new film, again being made in New York, is an adaptation of Tennessee Williams' *Orpheus Descending*, with the redoubtable team of Marlon Brando and Anna Magnani.

Lumet holds that a rediscovery of the dramatic and emotional possibilities of the close-up is one of the good things that television has begun to bring back to the cinema. He realises that on TV the close-up is sometimes used lazily as a substitute for the necessary identification of a character with a place and time. But its proper use, he considers, is important equally in films and TV. In *Twelve Angry Men*, the close-up played an integral part in the unveiling of the inner workings of a jury as they deliberated the fate of a young man on trial for murder. It also served its purpose well in the TV version, but this was a rare case because of the imposed technique of a closed room and a unity of time and action. If the method is forced on a theme or subject—as in Alfred Hitchcock's *Rope*—he doesn't consider that it always yields the best results.

In television, he argues, the director works outwards from the characters into the scope or surrounding qualities of a story, while in films the process is reversed. And for this reason he believes television thinking can bring a new firmness of progression and theme, provided it does not stifle the film's natural breadth and range.

Magnetic tape, in any case, will he believes eventually revolutionise both television and cinema. In the near future, it should be possible to record a film on tape and cut it quickly with potential showings in hundreds of theatres simultaneously via one copy. This could give a film a chance to play off quickly, allowing for greater experiment and more adventurous choice of subjects. Lumet strikes one as a dynamic and self-sufficient man: it is still too early to tell whether a firm style and viewpoint will eventually emerge in his films, or

whether he will remain a gifted director capable of putting infinitely varied subjects alike on to the screen and the tiny TV tube.

Robert Mulligan, the third of these young directors to find his way to films from television, has the look of a bright young businessman. Intensity, sincerity and common sense are evident in the way he talks about his work. Television is likely to remain his main activity, though he will soon make another film and has directed a play in the theatre. My talk with him was in a little ballroom where he was rehearsing for a live TV presentation of James Barrie's clever but faded play *What Every Woman Knows*. Seated at a table, he had a malted milk and one hour to give.

Mulligan's view is that television has a quality of vitality and spontaneity sometimes missing in film work. When he made *Fear Strikes Out*, his only film to date, in Hollywood, he held some rehearsals with an audience in order to give the producers an idea of the film, and feels that the presence of this audience heightened the intensity of the acting. For him, television has some of that old-time feeling of silent films when mood music was played for the actors and the director could keep working even while the camera was turning. Live TV, or even tape TV, in a sense retains this quality for the director, since he has a range of cameras at his disposal to catch the likeliest angle even during the shooting of a scene.

Television too, can suggest things that film has to show; and this is why he feels, like the other directors I interviewed, that a television background can bring something to films provided that the subject itself is keyed to this type of treatment. His own *Fear Strikes Out*, for instance, was the story of a boy urged and driven into action beyond his powers by an over-ambitious father. No one could live through somebody else without paying for it, and the price in this case was the boy's breakdown. Here the emphasis on acting and close-up was a direct asset, with the added range of the film providing a balance which enabled him to escape the limitations of TV.

Mulligan will soon begin another film called *The Rat Race*, the story of a young man who comes to New York from a small town and through his enthusiasm and naiveté rescues a disillusioned, embittered girl. Each has something to give the other. But Mulligan wants to make New York itself the real central character, to show the city as something living and palpable. Himself a New Yorker, he loves his city although aware of some of its shortcomings—and, like any true lover, he loves these as well.

Like Sidney Lumet, he impresses one as a man who could do competent work on almost any theme. So far, he admits, others have suggested stories to him, which he has accepted if he felt they had some quality that appealed to him. He feels, naturally, that his very selection indicates a personal viewpoint towards life and people, a form of commitment in general. But he had no direct theme in mind that he especially wanted to treat at the moment. It was time for him to go back to work...

* * *

Hollywood, in fact, has for some time rarely allowed a highly individual artist fully to develop his personality. There have been many who put their imprint on a film and made it their own, but the commercial demands would give little chance for an Ingmar Bergman, a Satyajit Ray or an Andrzej Wajda to develop. The influx of the television talents may thin these ranks even more by intensifying competition; but they do bring an awareness of more tense and topical themes and a simpler and more dynamic approach. Certainly the American temperament of energy, directness and innovation is evident everywhere in television. When a direction is found to channel all this creative energy, some great films (and unusual TV programmes) may again come from America.

"*Fear Strikes Out*": Robert Mulligan and Anthony Perkins on location.



BERTOLT BRECHT

an address to Danish Worker actors on the Art of Observation

This poem comes from a set of seven called "Gedichte aus dem Messingkauf". In each of these Brecht gives practical advice to those who work in the theatre. They thus offer a remarkably concise exposition of his aims and demands as a dramatist. But they are more than simply a precis of Brecht's own theoretical prose works: they are specifically didactic poems, but the practical universality of the images and observations occurring in them means that many of their lessons apply even outside the theatre. This poem, which Brecht wrote as a refugee in Denmark in the 1930's, certainly seems relevant to some of the problems of cinema and television as well.

YOU have come here to act plays
But now you are to be asked:
For what purpose?
You have come here to reveal
Yourselves in all that you can do
You think this worthy of being watched.
And you hope the people will applaud
As you transport them
Out of the narrowness of their world
Into the largeness of yours,
Sharing with you the dizzy peaks
And the tumults of passion.
But now you are to be asked:
For what purpose is this?

On their low benches
Your spectators begin to argue.
Some hold and maintain
You must do more than show yourselves.
You must show the world.
Where is the use, they ask
Of being shown time and time again
How this one can be sad,
How she is heartless,
How that one would make a wicked king?
Where is the use in this endless
Exhibiting of grimaces,
These antics of a handful
In the hands of their fate?

You show us only people dragged along,
Victims of foreign forces and themselves.
An invisible master
Throws them down
Their joys like crumbs to dogs.
And so too the noose is fitted round their necks—
The tribulation that comes from above.

And we on our low benches
Held by your twitches and grimacing faces,
We gape with fixed eyes
And feel at one remove
Joys that are given like alms,
Fears beyond control.

No. We who are discontented
Have had enough on our low benches.
We are no longer satisfied.
Have you not heard it spread abroad
That the net is knotted
And is cast
By men?
Even now
In the cities of a hundred floors,
Over the seas on which the ships are manned,
To the furthest hamlet—
Everywhere now the report is: man's fate is man.

You actors of our time,
The time of change
And the time of the great taking over
Of all nature to master it
Not forgetting human nature,
This is now our reason
For insisting that you alter.
Give us the world of men as it is,
Made by men and changeable.

Thus the gist of the talk on the low benches.
Not all of course agree.
Most sit their shoulders hunched,
With brows furrowed
Like stony fields ploughed
Repeatedly in vain.
Worn away by increasing daily struggles
They avidly await the very thing their companions
Hate.
A little kneading for the slack spirit.
A little tightening for the tired nerve.
The easy adventure of magically
Being led by the hand
Out from the world given them,
Out from one they cannot master.
Whom then, Actors, should you obey?
I'd say: the discontented.

Yet how to begin? How to show
The living together of men
That it may be understood
And become a world that can be mastered?
How to reveal not only yourselves and others
Floundering in the net,
But also make clear how the net of fate
Is knotted and cast,
Cast and knotted by men?
Above all other arts
You, the actor, must conquer
The art of observation.

Of no account at all
How you look.
But what you have seen
And what you reveal does count.
It is worth knowing what you know.
They will watch you
To see how well you have watched.
But one who observes only himself
Gains no knowledge of men.
From himself he hides too much of himself.
And no man is wiser than he has become.

Therefore your training must begin among
The lives of other people. Make your first school
The place you work in, your home,
The district to which you belong,
The shop, the street, the train.
Observe each one you set eyes upon.
Observe strangers as if they were familiar
And those whom you know as if they were strangers.

Look. A man pays out his taxes. He differs from
Other men paying their taxes.
Even though it is true
No man pays them gladly.
In these circumstances
He may even differ from his normal self.
And is the man who collects the taxes different
In every way from the man who must pay?
The collector must also contribute his due
And he has much else in common
With the one he oppresses.
Listen.
This woman has not always spoken with her present harshness.
She does not speak so harshly to all.
Nor does that charmer charm every one.
Is the bullying customer
Tyrant all through?
Is he not also full of fear?
The mother without shoes for her children
Looks defeated,
But with the courage still left her
Whole empires were conquered:
She is bearing—you saw?—another child.
And have you seen
The eyes of a sick man told
He can never be well again
Yet could be well
Were he not compelled to work?
Observe how he spends such time as remains
Turning the pages of a book telling
How to make the earth a habitable planet.
Remember too the press photos and the newsreels.
Study your rulers
Walking and talking and holding in their pale
Cruel hands
The threads of your fate.

All this watch closely. Then in your mind's eye
From all the struggles waged
Make pictures
Unfolding and growing like movements in history.
For later that is how you must show them on the stage.
The struggle for work,
Bitter and sweet dialogues between men and women,
Talk about books,
Resignation and rebellion,
Trials and failures,
All these you must later show
Like historical processes.
(Even of us here and now
You might make such a picture:
The playwright, having fled his country,
Instructs you in the art of observation.)

To observe
You must learn to compare.
To be able to compare
You must have observed already.
From observation comes knowledge.
But knowledge is needed to observe.

He who does not know
What to make of his observation
Will observe badly.
The fruit grower will look at the apple tree
With a keener eye than the strolling walker.
But only he who knows that the fate of man is man
Can see his fellow men keenly with accuracy.
The art of observing men
Is only part of the skill of leading them.
And your job as actors
Should make you prospectors and teachers
Of this larger skill.
By knowing and demonstrating the nature of men
You will teach others to lead their own lives.
You will teach them the great art of living together.

Yet now I hear you asking:
How can we—
Kept down, kept moving, kept ignorant
Kept in uncertainty
Oppressed and dependent—
How can we
Step out like prospectors and pioneers
To conquer a strange country for gain?
Always we have been subject to those
More fortunate than us.
How should we
Who have been till now
Only the trees that bear the fruit
Become overnight
Fruit growers?
Yet as I see it,
That is the art you must now acquire,
You, my friends, who on the same day are
Actors and workers.

It cannot be impossible
To learn that which is useful.
You are the very ones,
You in your daily occupations,
In whom the art of observing is naturally born.
For you it is of use
To know what the foreman can and cannot do,
To know also the ways of your mates exactly
And their thoughts.
How else save with a knowledge of men
Can you wage the fight of your class?
I see all the finest among you
Impatient for knowledge, making
Observation more keen
Thus adding again to itself.
Already the best of you learn
Those laws which govern
The living together of men,
Already your class makes ready
To overcome all that hindering you
Stands in the way of mankind.
Here is where you,
Acting and working,
Learning and teaching,
Can intervene from your stage
In the struggles of our time.
You with the intentness of your studies
And the elation of your knowledge
Can make the experience of struggle
The property of all,
And transform justice
Into a passion.

Translated by ANNA BOSTOCK and JOHN BERGER



"Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe": an evocative image from Jean Renoir's new film.

In the Picture

Production Alliance

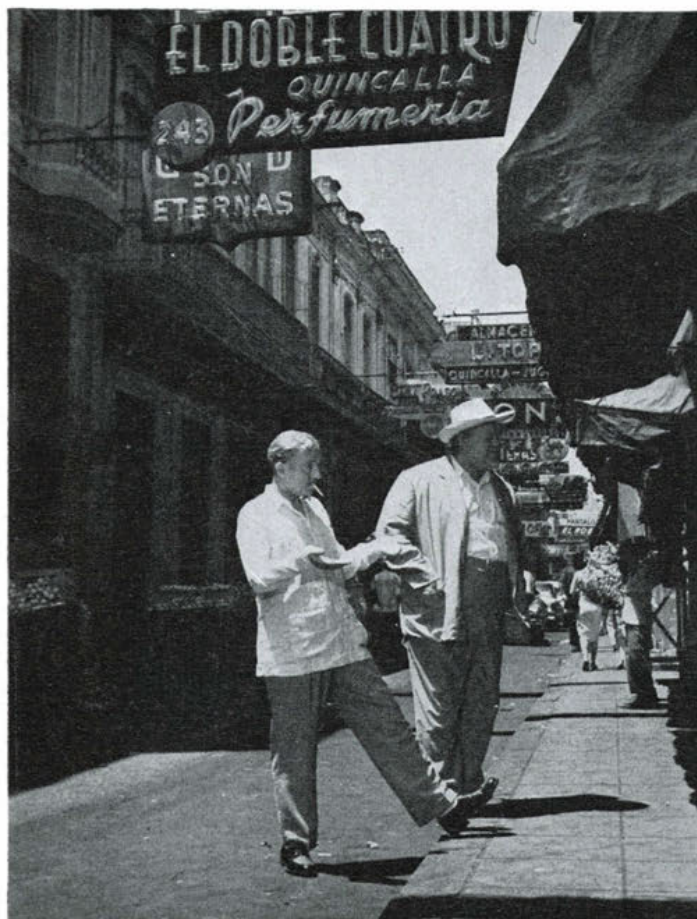
ANY MOVE TOWARDS greater flexibility in British film production is to be welcomed, particularly if it helps to strengthen the hand of the individual producer. This is what the new Bryanston Films organisation sets out to do, by bringing together into a loose confederation a group of production teams and individuals—sixteen in all—who will plan a joint programme, with finance and distribution guaranteed for their products, and will also have some say in sales and exploitation policy. Bryanston will not itself distribute (it acts through British Lion) but will in other respects exercise a good many of a distributor's functions. In effect, the film industry's usual balance of power has here been shifted slightly towards the side of the producers.

Finance (an available capital of one million pounds) comes from the producers themselves and from several investors—British Lion, Lloyds Bank, Alliance Film Studios and the Rank Organisation's Denham Laboratories. Members of the organisation represent about a dozen production teams (they include Aubrey Baring, Monja Danischewsky, Basil Dearden, Charles Friend, Colin Lesslie, Ronald Neame, John Bryan, Julian Wintle), with Sir

Michael Balcon as chairman and Maxwell Setton as managing director. There is a fairly wide cross-section of the British industry represented here, and it would be difficult to guess merely from the names involved what production policy the new alliance intends to follow. An interview with Sir Michael Balcon and Mr. Setton went some way towards elucidating this.

Out of its own resources, Bryanston estimates that it can mount about half a dozen productions a year. Its members are not bound to produce for it exclusively; conversely, it will be open to propositions from outside firms. Would this mean, for instance, that a project such as Sir Laurence Olivier's *Macbeth* might secure backing here? Apparently not, since Bryanston's resources are not going to carry it into the big budget territory. "No blockbusters," Sir Michael emphasised, although Mr. Setton pointed out that Bryanston might venture, in conjunction with other companies, into some more expensive undertakings. As far as choice of subjects goes, it should be practical to plan a production schedule as a whole, if necessary regaining on the commercial swings what might be sacrificed on the artistic roundabouts. Agreeing that films like *Look Back in Anger* and *Room at the Top* represent something new and forceful in British cinema, Bryanston's chiefs are understandably cautious about risking any forecast as to where they are likely to lead us. In any event, their own production strategy will depend on the taste and judgment of the individual producers who make up the alliance.

Sir Michael stressed that, "you couldn't today run a studio in the way Ealing was run—certainly not in this country, and perhaps nowhere in the world." Patterns of behaviour have changed, the essential stability which arose from the cinema-going habit has gone; and the policy Bryanston stands for is in part a recognition of this. With several production teams already represented on the board of British Lion, this move also marks a further stage towards British Lion's own potential development as a sort of British United Artists, a company for the ambitious independent. And in America United Artists' recent record has shown that this



Alec Guinness and Burt Reynolds in "Our Man in Havana", directed by Carol Reed from Graham Greene's novel.

can be one way to commercial success. Bryanston's independents will use Shepperton and other studios, and will escape the crippling burden of studio overheads; its members will individually retain their profits as producers, but will share jointly in distribution profits.

In the industry's present situation, Bryanston looks like a realistic as well as an ambitious venture. Its first production announcements are certainly encouraging. Charles Crichton has just finished *The Catbird Seat*, from a Thurber short story, with Peter Sellers starring and Monja Danischewsky as producer. John Osborne's *The Entertainer*, with Tony Richardson directing and Laurence Olivier again playing Archie Rice, is now on the floor and results from a distribution deal between Bryanston and Harry Saltzman, producer of *Look Back in Anger*. Bryanston has options on two further productions planned by Mr. Saltzman: Alan Sillitoe's novel *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*, which Karel Reisz will direct, and *City of Spades*, to be filmed by Tony Richardson.

Rome Commentary

ROBERT HAWKINS writes: Things are looking up on the Italian film scene, and for the first time in years most of the interesting directorial talent—both the proven and the promising—will have been back at work during 1959. Fellini, having shot through most of the summer, is now finally winding up his barbed exposé of Roman high life, *La Dolce Vita* (*The Sweet Life*), in which Marcello Mastroianni has been given the role of his life as the key character (and Fellini's "eye"): the roving reporter whose inquiries and adventures link the film's various episodes. Reportedly, it was to keep Mastroianni, whom he considers vital to the success of the film, that Fellini changed producers six times before Rizzoli and Amato agreed to give the director *carte blanche*; despite his recognised talent, the actor was not felt to be a strong enough factor with the international box-office. The long-idle Antonioni is likewise making his return with the recently begun *L'Avventura*, its interesting cast including Monica Vitti, Gabriele Ferzetti and Lea

Massari. Visconti still expects to make his prize-fighting film, *Rocco and his Brothers*, though its start has been delayed; and even the errant Rossellini has returned to his native land to direct *General della Rovere*, scripted by Sergio Amidei and Diego Fabbri, who also collaborated on *Open City*. Of the established talents, only de Sica (who stars in Rossellini's film) remains uncertain about his plans, with financing difficulties still delaying his "modern grotesque" *The Last Judgment Begins at Six O'Clock*, from a Zavattini screenplay.

There are some promising returns and new efforts among the younger talents: Valerio Zurlini has shot *L'Estate Violenta* (*Violent Summer*) on the Adriatic coast; Mauro Bolognini, after directing a quickie comedy, is now completing *La Notte Brava*, from a book by Pasolini; Francesco Rosi has made *I Magliari* on German locations and is thinking of filming John Horne Burns' *The Gallery* in its Naples locale; and Franco Rossi, who since making *Amici per la Pelle* has steadfastly refused to allow his name on the credits of films he has directed or co-directed, will admit to his just-completed *Morte di un Amico* (*Death of a Friend*), shot in Rome with a cast of unknowns.

Bergman and Wilder

INGMAR BERGMAN, in London last May for the presentation of his *Urfaust*, bore reassuringly little resemblance to the Bergman of press legend: the interview-proof martinet and restless neurotic. Approachable and ready enough to talk across a mild language barrier that involves an occasional speculative search for an English word, Bergman was also prepared to discuss his own work in the most practical terms. He makes films in summer and directs his own Malmö theatre company in the winter; his pictures cost around £45,000 each—expensive for Sweden, but equivalent to a second feature budget here. He could live without the cinema but not without the theatre; he feels, apparently, more professionally at home in the theatre, but finds the cinema both more demanding and more challenging as a medium to work in. His films, once made, are done with as far as he is concerned: they then become the concern of the distributors, and he moves on to something new. He spoke gently about the critics, who can, he believes, be helpful to a young film-maker; gratefully of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, whose enthusiasm did more, he thinks, than anything else to "discover" him for a non-Scandinavian public, cheerfully of a Swedish critic who has consistently disliked his work. There wasn't yet, he said, an "enemy" of this sort in Britain—but "there probably will be." He had little comment to make about his latest film, *The Face*, still "too close" to him for discussion. In his own work, he claims to have been most strongly influenced by Strindberg, and of course by the sternly religious upbringing about which so much has been written. Of the work of others, films he admires include de Sica's *Umberto D.* and Kozintsev's *Don Quixote*.

Bergman works for a national public and realises that it would be disastrous to his talent if he consciously tried to make films of "international" appeal. Billy Wilder, in London equally briefly for the premiere of *Some Like It Hot*, represents the other extreme of film-making: Hollywood at its most professional. He wasn't interested, he said, in making a film that "would win first prize at Belgrade or somewhere." That, as far as he was concerned, would prove nothing: the problem was to hold the mass audience. (Then a smiling aside: "This is going to come out very badly in an interview.") In fact Wilder talks fast, cynically, intelligently and entertainingly, and his best films have of course held a mass public through just those qualities. His own favourite remains *Double Indemnity* ("everyone has copied it since"), but he was cynical about the values of reminiscence. He told of how William Wyler recently sat through his early sound film *Hell's Heroes* again, and was so shaken by its shortcomings that he immediately shut himself up with a copy of the picture and completely recut it. *Some Like It Hot*, Wilder said, was remotely based on a once-popular German silent film called *Heaven and Earth*. He was a little surprised that he had been able to secure Marilyn Monroe for the lead—"it's the weakest part, so the trick was to give it the strongest casting." Did he, someone asked, discuss scenes with her at great length? "At short length—she gets the point right away. And she's very patient when she's working—would willingly play a scene forty times to get it right." For his next film, Wilder intends to collaborate again with I. A. L. Diamond, with whom he wrote *Love in the Afternoon* and *Some Like It Hot*, on a less frivolous subject: a love story set against the background of a big New York office. The leads will be Jack Lemmon and Shirley MacLaine, and the tentative title is *The Apartment*.

Paris Notes

LOUIS MARCORELLES writes: The success of films by the young French directors, both at festivals and in the commercial cinemas, has given a boost to the recent trends in our production: cheaper films; confidence in young talent; a greater appeal to the critical intelligence of the audience. With so many new talents at work, there is bound to be some wastage. But the essential fact remains: not since the 1920's has the climate of the French cinema been so favourable to the independent artist.

The older generation are themselves adapting their methods. Claude Autant-Lara, recently known as the specialist in big star, big budget co-productions, has just finished *Les Régates de San Francisco*, in which the only star name is Paul Meurisse. Jean Renoir's *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* marks a return to an earlier manner, that of his *Boudu Sauvé des Eaux* and *Toni* of the early 1930's. Produced by his own company and financed out of the takings of the recently reissued *La Grande Illusion*, Renoir's film is in colour and was shot in only twenty days, mainly on location at Cagnes, in the South of France. Some scenes were filmed at Collettes, the house where Auguste Renoir spent his last years. Entirely Renoir's own invention, the film resembles *La Règle du Jeu* and *Elena et les Hommes* in that it is a morality play which puts in question the values of contemporary society. A scientist (Paul Meurisse), preaching the cause of artificial insemination, finds a young and willing collaborator in a peasant girl, Nenette (played by a newcomer, Catherine Rouvel, who was discovered one evening at the Cinémathèque at a showing of *Louisianna Story*). Though planning a rich marriage, the scientist abandons his engagement and his scientific detachment when, catching sight one day of Nenette bathing naked, "he is invaded," in Renoir's words, "by far from scientific emotions." *Le Déjeuner sur l'herbe* (its title is borrowed from Manet's painting), seems like a double pilgrimage on the part of its creator: a return to his own family background, and to his early career in the French cinema.

As striking as Renoir's return is the extraordinary achievement of the *Cahiers du Cinéma* team, all of whom are at present either making features or about to undertake them. François Truffaut, working again with the screenwriter Marcel Moussy, is going to film *Tirez sur le Pianiste*, from David Goodis' novel *Down There*. The story of a former concert pianist, a failure reduced to playing in cheap dance halls, this is a film about friendship and solidarity. The lead is played by Charles Aznavour, the composer and singer who appeared in Franju's *La Tête contre les Murs*. Truffaut is also involved in *A Bout de Souffle*, the first feature of another young *Cahiers* writer, Jean-Luc Godard. Here Jean Seberg plays a paper seller for the *New York Herald Tribune* and Jean-Paul Belmondo a car thief reformed by love. Improvisation is going to play a large part in Godard's film. Jean Seberg, for instance, wearing the *Herald Tribune's* traditional yellow sweater, will sell the paper up and down the Champs Elysées while the hidden cameras are turning.

Improvisation also marks the first film by Eric Rohmer, one of *Cahiers'* editors. His *Le Signe du Lion* has been shot in the tourist Paris of the summer months, with the American Jess Hahn playing a young composer who loses and then regains a family inheritance. Jacques Doniol-Valcroze, Rohmer's editorial colleague, has been shooting *L'Eau à la Bouche*, from his own script, in a baroque chateau in the Pyrenees. He promises us a film à la Bergman, a close psychological study of a group of young people struggling both for love and for their heritage. Claude Chabrol, the pioneer along with Louis Malle of the *nouvelle vague*, has completed his third feature, *A Double Tour*, produced this time on a normal commercial footing for the Hakim brothers and shown at the Venice festival. Although under contract until 1962, Chabrol still intends to maintain his own production set-up. He has backed Rohmer's film, and he and Truffaut helped Jacques Rivette to complete the editing of *Paris nous Appartient*, which had to be abandoned last year because of lack of finance.

Pierre Kast, one of the leading French documentarists, has also completed a feature, *Le Bel Age*, from a story by Alberto Moravia. Very literary, full of dialogue, and almost too intelligent, this film studies, through the love stories of three young couples, women's domination of contemporary social life. This bitter-sweet story is played by some of the prettiest girls in Paris: the Canadian Alexandra Stewart, Françoise Brion, Françoise Prévot, the German Ursula Kübler. Among the luckless men: Gianni Esposito and Jacques Doniol-Valcroze. All the films of this new school have in common their avoidance of star names. They draw on unknown actors, the equivalent of those who might be found in England at Theatre Workshop or the Royal Court, professionals whose playing is free from the damaging tricks of professionalism.



Stanley Kubrick and Laurence Olivier on the set of "Spartacus".

Warsaw Notes

BOLESŁAW MICHAŁEK writes: A first series of inquiries into the cinema's place in society has recently been undertaken here by the Sociological Institute of the Academy of Science. The results, though at this stage provisional, are quite revealing. Sixty-one per cent of Polish workers and eighty per cent of students (the first sections of the community for which figures have been revealed) do not automatically follow the programmes of their local cinemas, but deliberately pick their films; 35 per cent of workers and 55 per cent of students are reported to attend the cinema at least once a week. In their choice of programmes, the influence of press and radio is significantly high. More than 30 per cent of the workers take press notices and information into account, while 25 per cent of the students base their choices solely on critical recommendations. This is a surprising discovery, and rather more than the critics would probably have hoped for. Predictably enough, the straightforward entertainment feature is generally preferred to the serious or "problem" picture, though among the fifty-odd films showing at the time of the inquiry it was not the simplest and most elementary that received the most votes, but those with some qualities of irony or intelligence. There is also evidence of a pronounced taste for the Polish national product, whatever the subject or calibre of the film.

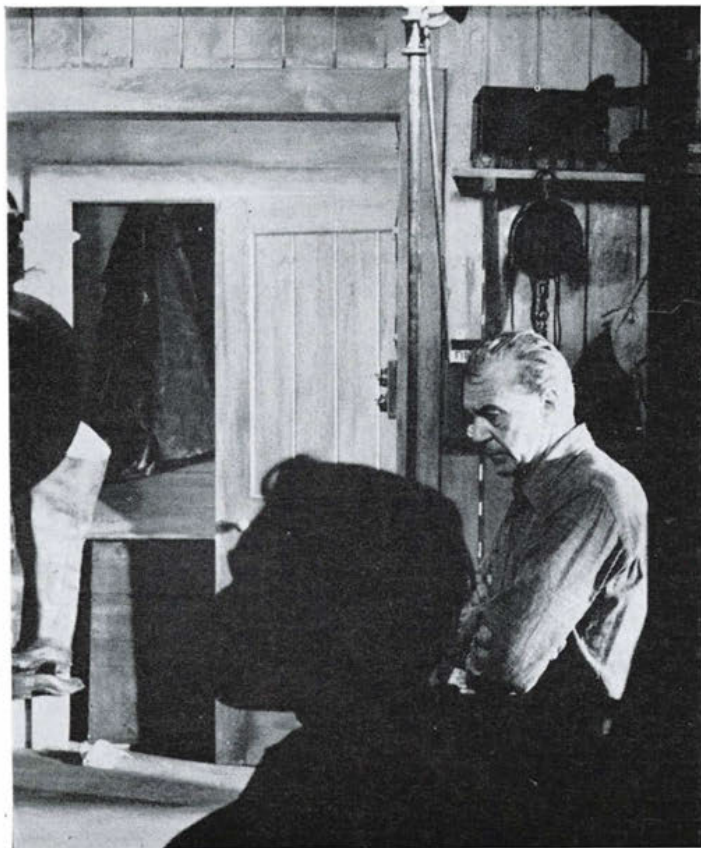
Among current Polish productions, we have seen the first film by Andrzej Wajda since his *Ashes and Diamonds*. Called *Lotna* (the name of a horse which figures largely in the story), this deals with the fate of a cavalry detachment during the defeat of 1939. Wajda here tries to place the violence of war within the setting of the marvellous and gentle autumn of 1939. It is his first colour film; and, unhappily, it is a disappointment. The director continues his pursuit of sharp and savage contrasts between violence and lyricism (a lyricism somewhat less convincing than previously), his taste for sometimes arbitrary dramatic and decorative effects—briefly, he seems to be carrying to its limit the whole "baroque" element in his style. But all this is based on a rather trivial and literary story, and the result is a series of bravura fragments rather than a sustained and human work such as *Kanal* or *Ashes and Diamonds*.

Wajda is now beginning work on a subject which seems remote from anything he has done to date: his new film will be a love story, tender and full of psychological insights.

Another production to note is *Krzyż Walecznych* (*Cross of Valour*) by a young director, Kazimierz Kutz. Made up of three episodes, its subject matter and directness of tone are reminiscent at times of Rossellini's *Paisa*. The direction (perhaps fortunately?) lacks dazzling brilliance, but is touching in its simplicity and instinctive realism. Kutz, who is still in his twenties and was a pupil of the Lodz film school, would seem from this film to be among the most promising of the new generation in Poland.

The Cinémathèque Revisited

RICHARD ROUD writes: Walking home at 5 a.m. along the Rue Réaumur (the Fleet Street of Paris), I was staggered to read in the headlines of the early editions that there had been a fire at the Cinémathèque Française. The idea that it might have been destroyed, just a week or so after its official re-opening at 82 Rue de Courcelles, made one realise more fully than ever the importance of this great monument (you could never call it an institution). The next day I discovered that the damage fortunately was fairly slight; and by the time this appears the Cinémathèque will be back to its normal schedule: its screenings of three films a night, seven days a week; its exhibitions; and its ceaseless hunting for films and diabolical ability to find them in the most unlikely places. The Cinémathèque was founded by Henri Langlois in 1936. Since then, with the help of his co-workers Mary Meerson and Lotte Eisner, he has gathered together a collection of 25,000 films. Furthermore, the Cinémathèque has been an important influence on all the young directors in France. It has even been said that the *nouvelle vague* really began in the Holy of Holies of the Avenue de Messine, the Cinémathèque's former theatre. From 1948, one could see there almost any night Astruc, Truffaut, Vadim, Resnais, Rohmer or Rivette. At these screenings they re-evaluated the cinema in terms of its history with a view to re-inventing it. Last May André Malraux, as Minister for Cultural Affairs, proclaimed at Cannes that he would make the Cinémathèque Française the equal in grandeur of the Comédie Française. Perhaps he will, but in the meanwhile Henri Langlois has given the Cinémathèque a unique position among the world's film archives.



Yugoslav Cartoons

DEREK PROUSE writes: The Yugoslav Festival at Pula this year confirmed beyond doubt that its new school of cartoonists is the liveliest in the world today: its stylish, authoritative work stood out in sharp contrast to the feature films, still predominantly concerned with partisan activity and Occupation stories.

Four teams are now at work for Croatia and Zagreb Films. Their drawing, like the best of UPA, is wittily spare; the subjects range from a full-blooded account of self-induced terror in a bachelor too much given to reading penny-dreadfuls (*The Big Fear*) to the ambitious implications of Vatroslav Mimica's *Alone*, a mordant yet moving depiction of a clerk fighting a losing battle with the machine age.

One of the brightest talents is Dusan Vukotic, a mild-mannered visionary with a blazing determination to brook no interference from the conformist studio heads who would prefer him to lower his sights and temper his intellectual ardour for the "deep" cartoon. Vukotic believes firmly that the cartoon is capable of expressing any subject, and certainly his *Concerto for Sub-Machine Gun*, the story of a much-respected citizen who brings off a fiendishly plotted bank robbery, has a texture quite dazzlingly ingenious, whilst *The Avenger*, adapted from a Tchekov story of a man's futile plans to avenge his wife's infidelity, is not only hilarious but densely atmospheric.

In lighter satirical mood, Nikola Kostelac's *Première* is a scathing account of a first-night audience which is there to be seen rather than to see. There is a splendid moment when a lorgnetted dowager assesses the necklace pendant of a neighbour, which obligingly answers her beady query by momentarily turning into a labelled money-bag.

A new spirit is rife in all these cartoons: an impish mischief, an iconoclastic concern for true human values, and abounding invention.

Work in Progress

Great Britain

ALEXANDER MACKENDRICK: *The Guns of Navarone*, Carl Foreman's £2,000,000 screen version of Alistair MacLean's war novel. Shooting (probably in Todd-AO or Technirama) begins in January, 1960; casting so far announced includes Gregory Peck and Anthony Quinn, as Canadians with the British forces. Open Road, for Columbia release.

NICHOLAS RAY: *Savage Innocents*, from a novel by Hans Ruesch about the conflict between primitive Eskimos and Europeans who come to build a power station in their country. With Anthony Quinn, Yoko Tani, Technirama and Technicolor. A somewhat involved Anglo-French-Italian production set-up, for Paramount release.

United States

JOHN FORD: a Technicolor Western, *Captain Buffalo*, photographed by Bert Glennon, with Jeffrey Hunter, Constance Towers, Billie Burke. Produced by Willis Goldbeck and Ford's son Pat Ford for Warner Bros.

STANLEY KUBRICK: a Roman spectacle, *Spartacus*, which looks like a remarkable change of pace after *Paths of Glory*. Laurence Olivier, Charles Laughton, Kirk Douglas, Tony Curtis, Jean Simmons, Peter Ustinov, head a cast of monumental proportions. Bryna, for Universal-International release.

SIDNEY LUMET: *The Fugitive Kind*, from Tennessee Williams' *Orpheus Descending*. Exciting cast headed by Marlon Brando, Anna Magnani, Joanne Woodward and Maureen Stapleton. A Jurow-Shepherd-Pennebaker Production for United Artists release.

France

ROBERT BRESSON: *Pickpocket*, a psychological study of a young thief, his way of life and his fight to rise above it. With Martin Lassalle, Pierre Etaix, Pelegri.

LUIS BUNUEL: *La Fièvre Monte à El Pao*, a personal and political tragedy set in a South American island during a revolution. A Franco-Mexican co-production, shot by Figueroa, with Maria Félix, Gérard Philipe and Jean Servais.

Charlton Heston (in shadow) and Gary Cooper in Michael Anderson's "The Wreck of the Mary Deare", from the novel by Hammond Innes. The picture was taken by Michael Ward.

the Festivals

BERLIN • CANNES • MOSCOW • VENICE



Kurosawa's "The Hidden Fortress": "the definitive Eastern-Western."

BERLIN

THE BERLIN FESTIVAL organisers cast their nets wide. This year forty-four countries were netted, whilst still excluding Eastern Europe. The result might be described as a jumble sale with a few marvellous bargains for the doggedly persistent. Of course there were a few minor blandishments as well, and a dry surprise or two: the chic CinemaScoped temptress from Iran, for instance, immaculate in well-cut riding clothes and operating in the desert; the discovery that the old chestnut about the trapped submarine from which only one may escape was still being made—and by Italy. The general level was dispiritingly mediocre, but eventually some four or five interesting films efface all memory of the rest.

Kurosawa's *The Hidden Fortress* erupted into the festival like a rhinoceros into a prairie of mild sheep. Never before has Kurosawa's allegiance to John Ford been more apparent; this, one felt, was the definitive Eastern-Western. The story is simple: a Samurai in disguise is conducting a Princess in disguise through enemy lines. To render their passage less ostentatious, the Samurai enlists two peasants into their company with the promise of gold. The by-play of these deceitful, raucous peasants, acted in broad, antic Kabuki vein full of comic whoops and barks, forms the light relief in a series of hair-breadth escapes, dazzlingly choreographed sword fights and shock effects timed with a master's instinct. There is one moment strongly recalling the appearance of

the Indians in *Stagecoach*: the little band seems to have reached temporary security when from every fold in the innocent landscape a menacing army materialises.

The superior adventure film obviously lies close to Kurosawa's heart, and his authority in the genre commands respect. Far below the stature of *Seven Samurai* in its conception, *The Hidden Fortress* is an example of a popular theme handled with such skill and enthusiasm as almost to disguise the fundamental lack of narrative distinction. Toshiro Mifune, stunningly athletic and as controlled as a panther, is the star.

The Rest is Silence offered the hope that Helmut Käutner, whose work has been so disappointing in recent years, might have recovered his lost form. Certainly this modern adaptation of the Hamlet story sounded ingenious. The son of an industrialist family in the Ruhr returns home from America, where he has spent the war years as a student. He has become utterly alien from this strata of wealthy German society and is quick to scent a sinister connivance in his mother's unseemly and hasty remarriage with his uncle. He gains access to the official newsreels of his father's funeral—an elaborate ceremony with Hitler in respectful attendance and his uncle hovering in discreet middle-distance. Also in the house lives a modest Ophelia, brimming with wistful affection and needing only a few more spiritual bruises to drive her into her private hot-house with only the exotic blooms to keep her sad company.

The film is pitched on a consistently subdued key—presumably to strip the obsession of extravagance and relate it more plausibly to the smooth hypocrisy of the high social milieu. But the result is a film of soporific remoteness. Intricately planned and well-made though it is, it remains fixedly at an emotional distance; and the simple intellectual exercise of spotting the original situations is a poor substitute for becoming involved in new ones.

Les Cousins, the film by Claude Chabrol which won the Golden Bear, is discussed elsewhere in *SIGHT AND SOUND*. Seeing it for the second time I was much less impressed than at first, though I still believe it has a truer insight into contemporary student anarchy than Carné's *Les Tricheurs*. But it is finally too taken up with surface illustration—the orgiastic party sequence, for instance, indulges lengthily in an easy show of decadence without advancing into the driving forces behind it. The film's approach is a fresh one, but it remains a good, unusual minor piece.

The most personal work came from the Argentine; and, not surprisingly in the calculatedly commercial set-up of Berlin, failed to get a prize even though it was one of the most eagerly discussed among the films shown. *The Fall* is directed by Leopoldo Torre Nilsson from a novel by Beatriz Guido, the team who made *The House of the Angel*. Once again their main theme is the impact of a hypocritical society on innocence, but this time the mood is not content to remain one of malevolent sexuality and claustrophobic disquiet. Here the surface is much more elaborately plotted.

A young girl arrives in Buenos Aires to study and takes a room in a house near the university. It is run by a brood of knowing, precocious children whose mother lies prostrate and well-nigh speechless with asthma in her room. Over the house hangs another, more powerful influence—that of a roving uncle who returns intermittently to occupy a mysterious locked room. At first shocked and appalled by the lawless children, the girl grows into a mature responsibility towards them, and into a vague, idealistic affinity with the absent uncle. Simultaneously, she is drawn into the web of a calculated seduction by a man who wants not only her physical capitulation but also the subjugation of her awakening personality.

For three-quarters of its length, *The Fall* impeccably fuses its varying moods: wild anarchic comedy with the children, and the tentative, troubled quest for moral values of the girl, harassed by ingrown prudishness and the superstitious fears derived from a rigidly Catholic upbringing. And the odd children have an irresistible reality, their eccentricities never seeming imposed: the twelve-year-old girl, her face flicked with malice, decked out in her mother's hats; her little sister, who habitually wears a small stuffed bird perched

crazily on her head; the prurient youngster who conducts a lively street corner trade in women's underwear to keep the household going. All their brazenness has a hint of angelic candour which renders their plight touching as well as comic. The tone is perfect, and the performances among the most extraordinary the cinema has produced from children. The film's last quarter, which includes the arrival of the uncle, seems to me less successful: the character of the man and his intentions remain somewhat obscure. But this is still a very satisfying work; and it confirms Torre Nilsson as South America's most individual talent, producing films of a unique fascination.

DEREK PROUSE

CANNES

A HORDE OF STARLETS ALL trying to look like Bardot... a huddle of international distributors hammering out deals in corners of bars and hotels... a shivering hopeful stripped of her bikini on the beach... a closing ceremony heavy with flags and portentous music. All the inevitable ingredients of a glamour-conscious film festival seemed very much in evidence at Cannes this year, and were duly recognised by eager copy-hunters and a peculiarly insensitive tribe of press photographers. Yet, despite all the flummery, there were excitements of a different kind on the Festival screen, with signs of a fresh wind blowing through the cobwebs of convention and tired cinematic traditions. Not that all the old traditions showed signs of dying quietly—among others, a heavily inept German version of *Arms and the Man*, a preposterous Greek "pastoral" and a song-bound Indian domestic drama represented the contemporary cinema's lower depths. Together with the majority of the short films shown, these features should never have passed the selection committee. Nevertheless, the forty odd pictures shown in and out of the competition had vitality enough to erase memories of the wasted hours. Even Britain won a popular success this year with *Room at the Top* (for which Simone Signoret received the Best Actress Prize). Judging by press reports, the significance of Britain's "breakthrough" puzzled and excited some French critics and annoyed at least one American.

The most rewarding single aspect of the festival was the opportunity offered to assess the work of the rapidly increasing young French school, seen in embryo last year in the first films of Truffaut and Chabrol. Now well over a dozen in number (and graduating partly from journalism and documentary), these young men have quietly revolutionised French production. Their methods are varied, their success is unequal; if they have a common purpose, it is to present a view of the world and its people at first hand, without artifice or false glamour. They prefer to use unknown players and shoot on real locations—Camus journeyed to Brazil, Resnais to Japan, Reichenbach to America and Truffaut to the squalid, non-tourist corners of Paris. In their films, the narrative is less important than the observation or emotional tone: for an hour or so, we are introduced to a group of people in the act of living. The construction may be episodic. The approach, in most cases, is fresh, alive and nonconformist.

As most of these French entries are mentioned in detail in M. Sadoul's article in this issue, I shall restrict myself to a few minor comments and disagreements. Of the three features—*Les Quatre Cents Coups*, *Hiroshima mon Amour* and *Orfeu Negro*—I feel that the latter, despite its riotous movement and moments of tenderness, is creatively the weakest of the group. It does not seem to me that Marcel Camus has yet found a style of his own and, surely, the film's social ramifications are hardly convincingly integrated into the Orpheus legend. Nevertheless, the film's vitality and heady atmosphere carry one along for at least part of the way.

Leopoldo Torre Nilsson's "The Fall".



Bunuel's

NAZARIN



To M. Sadoul's sympathetic comments on the first features of François Truffaut and Alain Resnais, I would add a special accolade to the child star of *Les Quatre Cents Coups*: Jean-Pierre Léaud communicates the boy's reactions to a hostile world with uncanny exactness and the whole performance suggests an extraordinary rapport between director and player. *Hiroshima mon Amour* is an extremely difficult work to assess on one viewing; I suspect that further acquaintance would confirm one's admiration for Resnais' style and method, and that the declamatory, literary dialogue of Marguerite Duras would still appear somewhat obtrusive and over-calculated. The kind of experience offered by *Hiroshima* is only rarely found in the cinema, however; here is a film with a unique intellectual as well as visual excitement.

Of the many other French films shown out-of-festival, François Reichenbach's American shorts (here bundled together into one film) included a sad comment on racial relations in the South, a horrifying visit to a Marine training establishment and an impressionistic study of New York, accompanied by Bartok. An artist with a viewpoint, Reichenbach combines criticism with a wry enjoyment of transatlantic habits and foibles. Perhaps his forthcoming documentary feature made in America will develop this viewpoint further.

So the movement continues... Several young directors, such as Rivette and Pollet, will shortly make their feature debuts, while new films by Franju, Chabrol and Malle are in active preparation. And at least one commercial imitation has arrived. Joseph Lisbona's *Les Dragueurs* (directed by Jean-Pierre Mocky, who scripted and played in Franju's lunatic asylum story *La Tête contre les Murs*) is a consciously daring sex comedy with a starry cast of bosomy leading ladies, much hollow cynicism and a defiantly "contemporary" look.

Taken as a whole, 1959's entries from the East did not surpass the achievements of previous years: war stories, period dramas, problems of rehabilitation were again well to the fore, but whatever the theme, the emphasis remained firmly on the human relationships involved. This was forcefully illustrated in the Yugoslav *Train Without Timetable*, concerning the mass emigration of a farming community from an arid region to the more fertile plains of the north. Influenced both by Italian neo-realism and by the American "trek" film, this had a fine epic sweep, a cast of likable young players and some unequal scripting, also in the Italian manner. The director, Veljko Bulajic, clearly knows his people well.

All kinds of influences could be traced in the Hungarian



Venezuela : "Araya".

entry, Zoltan Fabri's *Anna*, a melodramatic tale of a poor maid, seduced and humiliated in a bourgeois household, who is finally driven to the extreme step of murdering her employers. Despite Fabri's formidable technical control, his approach was too coldly intellectualised for the story to carry much emotional weight, so that it seemed vastly inferior to a picture like *A Sunday Romance*, in which style and substance were more aptly matched.

Shown at the end of a heavy day in an indigestible double-bill, another East European entry, Jiri Trnka's ambitious puppet adaptation of *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, received only a mild reception. Puppet films remain something of an acquired taste, perhaps. Even so, the strange enchantment of the film seems to me to outweigh its occasional periods of crabbed inspiration. Trnka's use of colour and Vaclav Trojan's outstanding score achieve some masterly effects in the forest scenes and the final masque. Trnka's fairy world may be different from that of Shakespeare, yet the film exists as a tribute from one poet to another.

Sergei Bondarchuk's *Destiny of a Man* (withdrawn from competition apparently in deference to German sensibilities) was a harshly uncompromising attack on Nazi brutality seen through the eyes of a Russian soldier in captivity who loses his entire family in the war. Bondarchuk (who acts as well as directs) indulges in some wild camera pyrotechnics, all of which are brilliantly executed, but the film's strength does not rest on its bravura alone. The director's deep personal convictions somehow ennoble the film's naivetés, so that it emerges as a solemn tribute to human fortitude.

Technically excellent, intelligently played, worthwhile themes... Again the well-worn phrases rise to the surface, yet it must be admitted that this year's Eastern entries left many critics in an uneasy state of mind. In many recent films, directors like Fabri, Wolf and Wajda (whose symptomatic *Ashes and Diamonds*, originally on the short list for Cannes, was replaced by a pleasant if under-directed children's film, *Little Dramas*) have over-indulged a passion for dated expressionist effects which now borders on the ludicrous. After years of Stalinist rigidity, the sudden discovery of Western styles and techniques, allied with a repressed urge to experiment in fashionably "filmic" terms, seems to have produced a new kind of formalism. This misguided fondness for tricked-up montage sequences and arty sound and camera effects now points towards a state of stylistic anarchy which might seriously undermine the real progress already made. Most Eastern film-makers are passion-



Yugoslavia : "Train Without Timetable".

ately interested in the work of their Western colleagues. What seems to be needed now is greater wisdom in assimilating the best and rejecting the worst that the West can offer.

A modest little film from the other side of the world helped to demonstrate what can be achieved when a minimum of artifice intervenes between the subject and the personal response of the director. Venezuela's *Araya*, directed by Margot Benacerraf (winner of the International Critics' Prize together with *Hiroshima mon Amour*) brings us into sharp contact with a community of isolated fishermen and salt workers; and Miss Benacerraf's obvious love and understanding amply makes up for some rough edges in editing and construction.

A promising new movement in France; a threatened stylistic crisis among the young Eastern school; some stirrings in Latin America. It would be misleading, however, to suggest that Cannes 1959 was entirely a festival of youth and experiment. The old guard from half a dozen countries also offered surprises and some disappointments. In the latter category must be placed Roberto Rossellini's long-delayed *India*. As might have been expected, the director's disorganised shooting methods showed up in the film's clumsy construction and erratic colour. Sometimes, as in the elephant sequences and some village scenes, everything flashed into life and one felt the presence of real talent; otherwise, *India* contained little to suggest that its creator has yet been able to resolve his personal and artistic crises.

And the surprises? Three films (from Russia, Japan and Mexico) communicated the kind of thrill which comes from recognising and becoming part of the personal world which only these artists are able to create. First, thanks to the Cinémathèque Française, who showed a beautiful print of the colour sequences from *Ivan the Terrible*, Part Two, we were able to see how Eisenstein reinforced his already startling imagery with an onslaught of vivid reds and blacks. Then, in the Japanese *The White Heron*, Teinosuke Kinugasa revealed how colour can be used to evoke a deceptively quiet world of exquisite interiors and repressed emotions. Taking the rather trite theme of the tragic love of a servant for a handsome painter, Kinugasa's perfectly controlled direction draws the audience slowly and almost imperceptibly into the lives of his characters. Stylistically the film makes adroit use of CinemaScope, notably in the final scene of suicidal panic.

Finally, there was *Nazarin*, winner of the International Prize, in which Luis Buñuel returned with his old ardour undimmed and proceeded to shock all those who did not wish to be reminded of bourgeois hypocrisy or religious bigotry. This is a complex work, open to several interpretations, but one thing is certain—although Buñuel's anarchism and "free-thinking" may be judged as anti-clerical, *Nazarin* is a profoundly pro-Christian work in the widest sense of the term. A poor Mexican priest, who tries to live by the simple dogma of his faith, finds himself in a cruel world of painted prostitutes, vicious criminals and godless lovers. The humiliations forced on him cause him to doubt and weaken. At the end, accepting a gift of charity from another human being, he continues on his way, now aware of his existence as a man as well as a priest. Buñuel's allegory, like those of Bresson and Bergman, does not attempt to find an answer to all the questions posed. Following the credo of the Italian neo-realists in another context, his primary intention is to make his audience "see" and understand. The sudden flashes of surrealist horror are still potent enough to shock, yet here the disgust is tempered by a strange love and recognition of all living beings: the characterisations of priest, prostitute and village dwarf are among the best things he has done since *El*. Unconcerned with text-book conceptions of "good" direction, Buñuel points his narrative

in an entirely personal way—each scene is used to annotate and comment on the priest's dilemma in his discovery of the "real" world; to reveal his uselessness when confronted with the power of sexual passion; and to stress the necessity for earthly love as well as heavenly forgiveness.

Unsentimental and uncompromising, *Nazarin* belongs to that small group of films which always reveal more on a second or third viewing. We should be grateful to John Huston, whose championship, in face of some opposition, helped to bring it to Cannes this year.

JOHN GILLET

MOSCOW

A SPECIAL CORRESPONDENT writes: This was the second Moscow International Film Festival. The first, in August 1934, marked the fifteenth anniversary of Lenin's nationalisation of the Russian film trade and industry. Lenin took the cinema seriously, setting the factual film above the fiction film, but comparatively few have agreed with him since.

This second festival, marking the fortieth anniversary of Lenin's decree, was a multi-ringed circus. In their habitual setting of overwhelming hospitality, the Soviet film industry and the municipality of Moscow offered their guests, delegates from 46 nations, trips to Leningrad and the Moscow Sea, visits to film studios and clubs, debates, discussions and receptions. Embassies and delegations gave parties in return in such profusion that one afternoon four embassies were running neck and neck. And of course films were shown morning, noon and night, hundreds out of competition, and in competition around a hundred shorts and documentaries and twenty-eight features.

All this had been set up at three months' notice by a staff who had never done the job before. And it worked, God knows how. From flowers at the airport on arrival to caviare and champagne at the airport on departure. All one did was to tell one's interpreter, whereupon goods, services, and even high officials materialised sooner or later out of thin air.

The main cinema performances were staged in the Kremlin Theatre inside the walls of the fortress: an elegant, efficient, modern auditorium. By wearing headphones and a transistor set, one could tune in to simultaneous translations as at an international conference.

Double feature programmes from 3 p.m. to nearly 7 p.m. and from 8.30 p.m. till after midnight. Delegations were presented on the stage and occasionally, to our impatience, speeches were made. The hit of the festival was Mr. Spyros



Moscow prize-winner: Sergei Bondarchuk's "Destiny of a Man".

Skouras, who invited the Soviet people to see more American films as a sure means of completing their seven-year plan.

The French supplied the cream of the entertainment, but out of competition. Alain Resnais' first feature film **Hiroshima Mon Amour** shook international Moscow and shocked the Communist-minded by the uncompromisingly individualist pacifism of its subject and the flexibility, tact and taste of its telling. The best film there, and the least likely to be bought for local distribution. Jury-member Christian-Jaque delighted everyone with the film that will be the goldmine of 1959, **Babette Goes to War**. A gem of satire, wit and imagination—all this and Bardot too. In other hands the subject could have been unbearable—Dunkirk, the Free French, the Gestapo in Paris—but Raoul Levy, writer-producer, and Christian-Jaque never put a foot wrong.

The **Diary of Anne Frank** filled the Kremlin Theatre until 2.30 in the morning. But for us a remarkable experience was the showing of **Room at the Top** after the opening ceremony in a sports stadium to an audience of around 10,000 people. How would it go, an angry young English film with Russian sub-titles and no simultaneous translations? Like a bird, unfaltering, followed with intense concentration, no-one stirring except to laugh. Jack Clayton's film is international in appeal. And that is notable in areas where sophistication has scarcely reached the cinema screen.

Three months' time and two months' notice were too short to attract a selection of high quality films into competition. The feature film selection suffered more than the documentary. Only features with a subject too controversial for Western festivals, or from countries which do not yet compete in Western festivals, possessed sufficient assets to grip the attention.

The pattern in the giving of awards was then politically and creatively acceptable to Moscow thinking, in both features and documentaries: the formula became best to the East, second best to the West. Top feature: **Destiny of a Man**, written by Sholokhov, directed and played by Sergei Bondarchuk (who was Youtkevich's Othello.) Top documentary: **The Canal Builders**, by the Vietnamese director Boui-Ding-Hak. Second prize for features: West Germany's **We, the Infant Prodigies**. For documentaries: **The Lords of the Jungle**, produced in the Belgian Congo by Henri Storck. And so on, down the line.

There were three revelations from unexpected quarters. Pakistan won a prize (divided with Czechoslovakia) for a touching film of life in a fishing village in East Bengal, called **The Day will Dawn**. Script and direction by A. Kardar, photography by Walter Lassally and soundtrack by John Fletcher were all beautifully balanced. North Korea turned in a stunning colour film based on a Robin Hood type of legend called **The Tale of Chan-Hyang**. The governor's son falls in love with a geisha, and to save her from a fate worse than death, is forced to dissimulate until he can renounce his class and lead a peasant revolt. But not done solemnly: wittily rather, and with humour and pathos. Award for exquisite photography, but sets and costumes admirable also.

The Mongolian film in black and white, **A Messenger of the People**, was finely and convincingly staged and acted. Photography highly praised; award for female acting.

Hungary, China, Czechoslovakia and Poland all turned in films of which civil servants evidently approved. Nameless shall be that majority for which no excuse could be found. Britain's entry **A Cry from the Streets** won recognition for Lewis Gilbert's direction of the children, whose performances were as natural as any that can be found in the whole gamut of English cinema.

The kindest way to put it is that with Stalinism out, and most of its frustrations extracted, there is no longer any need to regard the Soviet market as closed to any but films with

proletarian subjects. Films for Moscow should not be too sophisticated in matter or avant-garde in manner. But they can be gauged much as films for Western audiences are gauged: cowboys, musicals, comedies, classics, love stories have a chance. And the Soviet audience is more used to foreign films than the British, for example. There are no specialised or art houses there. The "foreign film", dubbed into the local language, plays in the ordinary popular cinema.

VENICE

TWO YEARS AGO, VENICE awarded its Grand Prix to Satyajit Ray's **Aparajito**. This year, it was more or less open knowledge at Venice that **The World of Apu**, the third part of Ray's trilogy, had been turned down for the competitive section of the festival, allegedly—however incomprehensibly—on the grounds that it too closely resembled the two previous films. Through the courtesy of the film's American distributor, it was possible to see **The World of Apu** privately; and there is happily no question that this strong and tender work *does* resemble the other two—in the sense that it shares their qualities, with the addition perhaps of a firmer, and appropriate, maturity of feeling. Ray is still stretching his talent; and he has brought his marvellous trilogy to a fitting conclusion.

A festival which could easily turn down such a film would need to be rich in masterpieces; and Venice, showing only fourteen films competitively, by implication operates the highest and strictest standards of selection. This year, there was a fairly general sense that too many of the competition entries were being effortlessly outshone by films not in the running for prizes. There was no quarrel with the showing of Rossellini's **General della Rovere**, in which de Sica plays a trickster turned war hero, or Bergman's **The Face**, or Otto Preminger's **Anatomy of a Murder**, a film for which no hats are likely to be thrown into the air, but which is still a calculatedly shrewd and showmanlike exploitation of a murder trial. But there were other entries less well adjusted to the standards Venice sets itself, and certainly unable to stand comparison with Ray's film.

Arriving too late for the controversial Rossellini picture, I found the most exciting of the competition entries the Japanese **Enjo (Conflagration)**. Directed by Kon Ichikawa, who made **The Burmese Harp**, this is another slow, sad, evoca-



"The Savage Eye".

tively strange work, the story of the gradual disillusionment and final suicide of a young student living in a Kyoto monastery. The boy stammers and can't easily express himself; he hates his sluttish mother; he loses confidence in the smug, self-assured abbot; he finds that even the golden temple, symbol to him of everything still beautiful and uncorrupted, is regarded by its guardians largely as a tourist attraction to draw American dollars. So, quietly and despairingly, he sets fire to the temple and then throws himself out of the train which is taking him away to prison. Magisterially shot in black and white CinemaScope by Kazuo Miyagawa, the cameraman of *Rashomon*, the film dodges every implication of melodrama in its subject. Its points are often made obliquely, sometimes cryptically; its style is intense, reasoned, concentrated. The mood *Enjo* reflects is one not unfamiliar in Japanese writing, and in fact the film is taken from a novel: as all the gates of hope are closed behind the young student, it looks back in sorrow and bitterness, though not in anger.

Another lesson in the use of black and white CinemaScope, of a very different kind, came from Mario Monicelli's *La Grande Guerra*, with its great raking shots of the trenches and barren military landscapes of the first war. This is a big, rambling production, competently done but increasingly indeterminate in its attitude to war, which wanders from the anti-heroic towards a standardised rogue-into-hero climax. Different brands of conformism were also apparent in films from opposite ends of Europe. The Hungarian entry, Felix Mariassy's *The Sleepless Years*, stands rather drably for socialism in its account of an industrial suburb of Budapest, developed through five anecdotes dating from the first war to the second. Mariassy's gentle, good-humoured affection for his characters comes through strongly, notably in the lightest of the stories, about a young couple and a lottery prize, but the moral of each little episode is urged home with all the subtlety of a political slogan painted on a wall. Even so, this was distinctly less of a disappointment than *A Double Tour*, the new film by Claude Chabrol. Photographed with unfailing elegance by Henri Decae (whose first colour feature this is), Chabrol's picture is taken from an American thriller, with murder breaking into the tensions of a Provençal household thick with hatreds given fierce and unrelenting expression. There are enough tricks to remind one of Chabrol's allegiance to Hitchcock, and an air of intellectual dilettantism, of playing with effects and emotions for their own sake, suggesting an extraordinarily rapid softening of the obstinately independent spirit Chabrol showed in *Le Beau Serge*. It is not particularly encouraging that he has been quoted as finding this the most satisfying of his pictures.

If this standard bearer of the *nouvelle vague* shows signs of becoming a little fatigued and fashionable, there are some stubborn American independents around. *The Savage Eye*, made by Joseph Strick, Ben Maddow and Sidney Meyers, is a film bound to divide opinions. Its images of Los Angeles, of the disillusioned and the discontented—the incantatory rituals of a faith healer, a line of bored women under hair-driers, a strip-tease act, crowds urging on the professional brutalities of the wrestling ring, victims of street accidents, sad, lost faces in bars—are often corrosively violent and disturbingly exact. But the narrative, a duologue between a woman newly divorced and eaten up by self-pity and self-hatred, and her mentor or conscience, strains exhaustively after poetic imagery, significant relationships. The whole film lacks intellectual discipline, and I would have preferred the caustic documentary without the quivering sensibilities or the sentimental-surrealist back to childhood images of the conclusion. Plainer, though not much less forceful, is Lionel Rogosin's *Come Back Africa*. This is a rough, resolute document about Apartheid and the African, which does not attempt to tell the whole truth but, within the limits of its resources and unpretentious technique, leaves the impression of honestly saying what it can.



Venice prize-winner: "General della Rovere".

As usual, some of the pleasures of Venice came from the retrospective shows, mainly devoted, at this twentieth festival, to past prizewinners. Among an extraordinary range of films, the two greatest rarities were probably von Sternberg's witty and decoratively intoxicating *The Devil is a Woman*, and a showing of *La Règle du Jeu* with an additional twenty minutes or so, cut at the time of the film's first commercial distribution. Renoir was also represented, out of competition, by *The Testament of Dr. Cordelier*, made for French television. It looks, admittedly, very much like any television film; but as a *jeu d'esprit* on the part both of its creator and of Jean-Louis Barrault, who plays the upright doctor and the alarming, capering monster of his Jekyll and Hyde creation, the film is very watchable. On the day these two productions, separated by more than twenty years, were shown, the festival was unmistakably Renoir's.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

THE LONDON FILM FESTIVAL programmes will include many of the features shown during the summer at other European festivals. The festival opens with four days of cartoon and short films (October 12th-15th), followed by three days of films for children (October 16th-18th). During the feature festival, running from October 19th to November 1st, the following of the films discussed in these articles will be shown: *Come Back, Africa*; *The Hidden Fortress*; *Hiroshima mon Amour*; *Nazarin*; *Les Quatre Cents Coups*; *The Savage Eye*; *The Sleepless Years*; *Train Without Timetable*; *The World of Apu*. Other features to be shown include Karoly Makk's *The House Under the Rocks*, Konrad Wolf's *Stars*, Denis and Terry Sanders' *Crime and Punishment, U.S.A.*, Mark Donskoi's *At a High Price*, Satyajit Ray's *Jalsaghar*, Ingmar Bergman's *So Close to Life*, and the United Nations film *Power Among Men*.



Visconti and Alida Valli on the set of "Senso".

VISCONTI

interviewed BY

JACQUES DONIOL-VALCROZE
and JEAN DOMARCHI

While in Paris to stage William Gibson's play *Two for the Seesaw*, Luchino Visconti was interviewed by the writers on behalf of *Cahiers du Cinéma*, to whom we are grateful for permission to publish this tape-recorded conversation. After two years away from the film studios, Visconti is reported to be beginning work on a boxing picture, *Rocco and his Brothers*, to be made on location in Northern Italy.

To open the discussion, Doniol-Valcroze and Domarchi asked Visconti about the circumstances in which his collaboration with Jean Renoir on *Partie de Campagne* had come about . . .

THE CIRCUMSTANCES WERE certainly curious. When I was young, I was more attracted by the cinema than the theatre, but as a designer rather than a director. Then I became pre-occupied by all sorts of other things, horses, for one . . . And then one day I met Gabriel Pascal, the producer of Machaty's *Erotikon*, in Italy. He suggested that I make a film in England based on Flaubert's story *November*. The idea definitely appealed to me, but once I got to London and Alexander Korda's offices, where we'd arranged to meet, I suddenly had the impression that Pascal was a bit of a dreamer, with nothing in the way of solid plans.

This rather scared me off the whole idea, so I went on to Paris to see some friends of mine. One of them was Coco Chanel, who said: "If you want to meet someone who's really seriously tied up in the cinema, I can fix you an introduction. He's a friend of mine, Jean Renoir." I didn't know him at all; I hadn't seen *La Chienne* or for that matter any of his films. He was all set to make *Partie de Campagne* and I became third assistant. The other two were Becker and Henri Cartier-Bresson. What my job mostly amounted to was seeing to the costumes. The film was never finished because of a whole catalogue of accidents: the weather, one of the actors had toothache trouble, and so it went on. I just went back to Italy.

Three years later, Renoir asked me to work as his assistant on another film, *La Tosca*. But we'd hardly shot more than a sequence when war broke out and Renoir had to return to France. I finished the film with the first assistant, Koch: a terrible film. It was all anyone could do.

After that, I started to write my own scripts, including an adaptation of a Verga short story. I had to present my project to the Fascist ministry and they turned it down on the pretext that it was a story about brigands. One day when one of my colleagues, Gianni Puccini, went to Paolini's office at the ministry he caught sight of my manuscript lying on a desk. Written in red on the first page was "No more brigands!" That's funny, wouldn't you say? But Paolini and his Fascist friends didn't seem to think so!

It was about then that I found among my old papers a typewritten French translation, which Renoir had passed on to me, of James Cain's *The Postman Always Rings Twice*. It originated, I think, in an exchange between Renoir and Duvivier. I worked on this story with de Santis, Alicarta and Puccini, who were my colleagues at that time: and the result was the script of *Ossessione*. This time the Fascists passed it. But from the moment shooting started they began to interfere in a dozen different ways: they insisted on seeing the rushes, they insisted on certain passages being cut . . . according to them, I would have had to cut practically everything. I managed to turn a deaf ear to all this; I mounted my film as I wanted and I organised a screening in Rome. It was like a bomb exploding in the cinema: people saw a film which they hadn't thought possible. And in spite of all sorts of Fascist obstructions, *Ossessione* turned out to be a big success: archbishops even were seen going into the cinema to give

the film their blessing—I'm not making that up, it's absolutely true. When Mussolini's last government took refuge in the North, they took my film away, cut it and brought it out in a new version; and the negative was destroyed. The copies in existence today come from a dupe negative I had had made.

Has your work with Jean Renoir influenced you at all?

Renoir influenced me enormously. We all learn from someone; we never really invent anything. One does perhaps make discoveries, but one is still very much influenced, especially when one is making one's first film. It's been said that *Ossessione* was influenced by the French cinema in general but that just isn't true, except that it was certainly Renoir who taught me how to work with actors. I was only with him a month or so but that was enough, because I was so fascinated by his personality.

Theatre and Cinema

Did you work in the theatre before making Ossessione?

Yes, as a stage designer, and even then in what you might call a very marginal capacity.

And later on, did your career as a theatre director change your approach to film-making?

It's hard to say. *La Terra trema* came after my earliest theatre experience and I wouldn't have thought it showed theatrical influences. *Senso*, yes, because that's the way I wanted it. The opening of the film makes my purpose pretty obvious. You see a melodrama enacted on the stage, and this melodrama leaps across the footlights and expands in real life. That's the story of *Senso*, a melodrama: that's why I opened with the theatre sequence. I could have found a hundred other ways of starting the picture. As a matter of fact the first draft of the script did open quite differently, with the arrival of the Italian troops at Verona. In the hospital, they came across a mad woman of sorts who didn't know who she was or where she came from: that was the Countess Serpieri. But when I got down to shooting, I realised that the same mood and temperature—after the style of traditional Italian melodrama—ought to run right through the whole picture. So yes, certainly, this film was influenced by my theatrical experience. But not *La Terra trema*. And certainly not *Bellissima*.

And Notti Bianche?

Notti Bianche neither. It's theatrical in the sense that it was a story about two people shot entirely in a studio set. That gave a sort of depth or resonance to the backgrounds. But the film could just as well have been shot on location in Leghorn if there hadn't been production problems. These turned out to be insurmountable, as it happened. It was winter: we could only have filmed for a few hours at a time, at night remember, with the cold and the wind to contend with. This was out of the question as we'd engaged Maria Schell for a limited period only. So that, certainly, affected the film's style, but not all that much.

I know what people say about me every now and then: that my films are a bit on the theatrical side and my stage productions a bit filmic. I don't see anything very wrong in that. All methods are good. I don't think the theatre ought to reject techniques if they serve a useful purpose. I don't think the cinema has to reject them either, so long as they work. Of course it's easy enough to make mistakes:

perhaps I've been guilty of exaggeration in my use of devices which aren't typical of the cinema. But avoidance of the theatrical isn't a hard and fast rule. One's only got to look back to the cinema's origins—Méliès, for example.

Questions of Content

Pio Baldelli, in Cinema Nuovo, has recently called you a "mannerist." If one uses this in an aesthetic sense, it's obviously not true. But in the sense the term was used in the sixteenth century, say—in the sense of having a leaning towards refinement in decoration—would you then accept this as fair comment?

No.

Not even in the latter sense?

No, not at all. It's Pio Baldelli who thinks so. You know, there's another writer who accused me of mannerisms, M. Rondi, after *La Terra trema*. Coming from him, it was a damning comment. But when M. Rondi saw *La Terra trema* again, ten years later, he reversed his original judgment entirely. Because *La Terra trema* is a film that has to be seen again, and maybe quite some time after the first viewing. Recently, *Cinema Nuovo* published an article by Oreste del Buono which to my great pleasure amounted to a complete revision of his first feelings about the film; at first, he said, he hadn't understood it at all, whereas now he found it immensely moving and one of the greatest films ever made! Of course he's exaggerating, but it's interesting the way he makes a parallel between my film and the novels of Verga or even Stendhal. All these feelings of aestheticism or mannerism are simply first impressions, and therefore probably rather superficial.

Neo-realism, for you, depends above all on content?

Entirely. They've tried to make out that neo-realism involves questions of form; but that doesn't mean anything, as we've had a chance of finding out by bitter experience. Neo-realism is first and foremost a question of content, and that's what matters. *Senso* is in every way a realist film (I don't know why we have to tack on this "neo"! in that I tried to make it with maximum realism, at the same time giving it this element of Italian melodrama.

Is it true that in Senso you were trying to rediscover the style of certain Italian painters? Sadoul mentions Fattori.

No. Needless to say I know Fattori's battle scenes are contemporary in period to *Senso*, but I never sought to copy him. I simply tried to get at the truth. And as Fattori painted the truth, it's hardly surprising that our works coincide on one level or another.

In these battle scenes, it's been said that your point of view is Stendhalian.

Very much so. I've always had Stendhal in mind. If *Senso* hadn't been cut—if it had been shown as I wanted—you'd have seen something like Fabrice at the battle of Waterloo. Fabrice moving behind the battle. And the Countess Serpieri was modelled on la Sanseverina. So there it is, my ambition would be to film a great Stendhal novel—*La Chartreuse*, if it hadn't been done already. But you know, it ought to have made an extraordinary film. La Sanseverina is a marvellous character; and then the city of Parma would really lend itself to the camera. Christian-Jaque's mistake was to shoot it in Rome. For us Italians, that's unforgivable. The Stendhalian world is full of fantasy, but it has strong realistic attachments. Parma is Parma. The Po is the Po.

And Notti Bianche? Why did you choose this very subjective



Neo-realism : the last scene of "Osessione".

Dostoevsky story which doesn't seem to fit in with the rest of your work?

That's true. But *Notti Bianche* grew out of so many different factors. It came into being at one of the most difficult moments in Italian production. We wanted to make a film, nothing very big or extravagant, which could tell its story in a comparatively short space of time, preferably realistic, yet which at the same time moves on the fringe of a dream. We looked for what we wanted in I don't know how many writers, and in the end it was Emilio Cecchi who suggested *White Nights* to us. For my own part, I must say I'm attached to this little story—very big the way Dostoevsky wrote it, little the way I filmed it—attached just because it offers this possible escape from reality: it's got this contrast between the awakening, when everything is brutal, and those three hours at night spent with this girl who becomes part of a dream, with something unreal and really rather impossible about her. It's that, the entertaining thing about that, which attracted me.

Social content isn't altogether absent from the film, when you show the awakening to reality?

Perhaps I went a little too far in that direction—the contrast between dream and reality. It upsets the rhythm of the film.

How long did the shooting take?

The fixed schedule: six or seven weeks. I made it a point of honour not to go over the schedule. People say that it takes me six months to make a film. That was true, except this

time I wanted to show that I could finish the job in six weeks; perhaps the film suffered because of this.

Bellissima

In Bellissima, as well, one gets the impression that the story isn't much more than a pretext, something subordinate in fact, and that outside the story the film has a point of view that isn't exactly optimistic.

Yes, that's true. The story really was a pretext. Zavattini was very annoyed by the changes I made. The whole subject was Magnani: I wanted to create a portrait of a woman out of her, a contemporary woman, a mother, and I think we pretty well succeeded because Magnani lent me her enormous talent, her personality. That was what interested me. Not so much the cinema *milieu*. It's been said that I wanted to make something ironic, malicious even, of this setting; but that wasn't what I had in mind.

All the same, there is some ironic intention in the film. Isn't it implicit in the character of the film director, played by Blasetti?

Yes, I did handle that part of the film ironically, but I shouldn't really say so because I annoyed Blasetti as well. I told him: "Do what you like; be what you are." He worked at it very seriously, very charmingly. But in the musical accompaniment, taken from Donizetti's *L'Elixir d'amour*, there is a motif called the "Charlatan's theme." It turned up each time Blasetti appeared. He was unaware of this at first—he didn't know Donizetti—until one day somebody told

him about it. He wrote me an indignant letter: "Really, I'd never have believed you capable of such a thing," and so on; and I replied: "Why? We're all charlatans, all us directors. It is we who put illusions into the heads of mothers and little girls . . . We're selling a love potion which isn't really a magic elixir: it's simply a glass of Bordeaux, the same as in the opera. I'd apply this charlatan's theme just as much to myself as to you." Well, he saw what I was getting at, and now we're reconciled.

So there you are—that's the irony I put into the interpretation of this character. And there was a little of it in Walter Chiari too. He played a cynic. The film world is full of that type.

La Terra Trema

It's generally held that a characteristic feature of Italian neo-realism is the employment of non-professionals. But with the exception of La Terra Trema you seem to prefer working with professional actors.

The use of non-professional players isn't an indispensable part of neo-realism. Certainly, you can take "real" people straight from the street who match the character you want exactly, but then the problem becomes how to make them into actors. I spent hours and hours with my fishermen in *La Terra Trema* over one little line of dialogue. I wanted the same effect from them that I'd have got from an actor. If they had talent, and some certainly did (plus something even more extraordinary—a complete lack of nerves in front of the camera), they could pick up what you were after quite quickly. The root of the matter with actors is to get them to conquer their own nerves, their complexes. But these people hadn't any. What I got from them, it would have taken me even longer to get from actors. At the same time, the text wasn't pre-planned: I got them to make it up for me themselves. For instance, I took the two brothers aside and told them: "Now look, this is the situation. You've lost your fishing boat, you're desperate, you haven't enough to eat, you don't know what to do. One of you is young and wants to clear out, the other wants to keep him here. Tell him what it is that is taking you away." He answered: "I don't know—to see Naples, I suppose . . ." "... Good, that's the right idea. But why exactly is it that you don't want to stay here?" He answered with the precise words he uses in the film: "Because here we are like animals. They give us nothing. So I want to leave right away and see the world." For him, the world was Naples, a long way away, it might as well have been the North Pole in fact . . . Then I turned to the other: "What would you say to your brother, your own brother, to keep him here?" He was already very upset, tears in his eyes. He thought this really *was* his brother. Now that is the sort of thing one wants from actors and yet never seems to get from them. With tears in his eyes, then, he said: "If you go further than the Faraglioni (that was the name of the two rocks) the storm will carry you away."

Now who'd have been able to write that? Nobody. He said it in Sicilian and I can't repeat it exactly as I've forgotten the dialect, but it sounds very beautiful, like Greek.

The dialogue was built up like that. I only sketched it in myself. They gave it their ideas, their images, their flourishes. Then I made them rehearse the text through, sometimes for three or four hours, as one does with actors. But the

words weren't changed: they'd become fixed, as if they'd been written. But of course they weren't written, only invented by the fishermen.

Does the Sicilian-dialogue version exist at all?

The original version, my own personal property and the one shown with subtitles at Venice, is in real Sicilian. It's an extraordinary language, a language of imagery, and Verga is the only writer who has been able to do something with it. He invented a special language, something between Italian and the Sicilian dialect. But the real thing is very hard even for Italians to understand.

De Sica sometimes does things that I can't understand. In *Bicycle Thieves*, for instance, he had Maggiorani's words dubbed in by an actor, and even the text didn't really go with Maggiorani's appearance. Mind you, *Bicycle Thieves* was a very fine thing, very strong, but to my way of thinking it had this grave miscalculation. Unfortunately I had to use dubbing myself in *Senso* because Farley Granger and Valli played their parts in English.

You know, my first choice for *Senso* was Bergman and Brando. But Rossellini was very jealous at that time, refusing to let Bergman work for anyone but himself, and although she might have accepted, it just wasn't possible. And Lux didn't want Brando and gave me Farley Granger. Strange, isn't it? And a pity, because it really would have been something extraordinary to cast Bergman and Brando together.

Senso

What is most important to you about Senso, its social aspects or its subjective emphasis?

First and foremost, it's slanted towards the historical aspect. I even wanted it to be called *Custoza*, after the name of a great Italian military defeat. That caused an outcry: from Lux, from the ministry, from the censors. So at the outset the battle had much greater importance. My idea was to mount a whole tableau of Italian history, against which the personal story of Countess Serpieri would stand out, though basically she was only the representative of a particular class. What interested me was to tell the story of a war which ended in disaster and which was the work of a single class.

The first final version was quite different from the one seen today. It didn't end, for instance, with the death of Franz:

(Continued on page 191)



Romantic realism : Alida Valli in "Senso".

* * * * * *suddenly,*



last summer * * * *



At Shepperton, in sets designed by Oliver Messel and rigorously closed to the press, Joseph L. Mankiewicz has been filming the screen version of Tennessee Williams' *Suddenly, Last Summer*. Since the play's theme involves cannibalism, homosexuality and some of Williams' more nightmarish preoccupations, it seems unlikely that this can be one of the most strictly literal adaptations of his work. Katharine Hepburn plays the New Orleans mother of a poet hideously murdered, Elizabeth Taylor the girl whose mind has been shattered by knowledge of the secret of his death, and Montgomery Clift the surgeon concerned in her case.



LEFT: Katharine Hepburn descends by lift to a waiting Montgomery Clift.
 ABOVE: Hepburn and Clift on the set.
 ABOVE RIGHT: Katharine Hepburn, with a background of an apparent shanty-town on the Shepperton lot.
 RIGHT: Joseph L. Mankiewicz runs through a scene with Elizabeth Taylor.

JOHN GILLETT

THE Survivors

John Ford on location for "The Horse Soldiers", with John Wayne, Constance Towers and William Holden



WHEN A POPULAR AND DISTINGUISHED director returns to the commercial cinema after an eight-year absence, one is bound to feel some qualms, especially as his best work belonged to a period far removed from the uncertain conditions of Hollywood in the late 1950's. But the first five minutes of *A Hole in the Head* were enough to dispel any lingering doubts. Stylistically at least, Frank Capra had returned—intact. Taking a play by Arnold Schulman as his starting point (necessitating an obvious and rather awkward switch from Jewish to Italian-American family comedy), Capra has embellished its lightweight and fairly predictable comic situations with his old, characteristic warmth and generosity, as well as some eccentric overtones reminiscent of *You Can't Take It With You*. The result is a fast-moving and cheerful *divertissement*, its artful combination of sentiment, comedy and child appeal all a little larger than life and thereby guaranteed to win an audience's approval.

Though the style is as personal and assured as ever, a noticeable change of emphasis in the subject matter reveals how far Capra has moved from his philosophy of ten or twenty years ago. His modern hero (Frank Sinatra) is no longer an innocent stubbornly pitted against a monstrous political machine, but a fast-talking Miami hotel proprietor plagued with money troubles and the necessity to "think big" and beset with quarrelsome relatives determined to marry him off to some nice, homely woman. Characters are introduced and then dropped after serving their purpose and there is little attempt at dramatic structure. Instead, Capra develops an inconsequential series of very funny character sketches and manages to include some late 'fifties references for good measure—the hero's scatty girl friend (Carolyn Jones), with her portable radio, surf-board and minimal beach wear, might be described as a "bongo beatnik," a modern sex symbol with an alarming appetite.

As in the old days, Capra retains the frankly theatrical tone of the original by shooting some of the long dialogue scenes straight on to the players; yet the effect is never stagy or boring. His control is so finely judged that there is always an onward movement, a crisp cutting edge (supplied by an old colleague, William Hornbeck) and a continuously lively surface action. A typical example is the quarrel between the brothers, with Thelma Ritter intervening, in which he actually manages to make funny the lame, repeated gag of a man sitting down on a broken chair. Most enjoyable of all, though, is the direction and shaping of the performances. Capra's effect on his players is rather that of a great conductor on his orchestra. Given reasonably pliable material, he is able to point a phrase here or accent a beat there, at the same time insuring perfect unanimity in timing and expression. It is not surprising that Frank Sinatra here gives his most human and easy performance, that Edward G. Robinson assumes the mantle of a dry, dead-pan comedian with monumental assurance, or that the hitherto mannered Eleanor Parker plays with a friendly and relaxed feminine charm. The tender little sequence in her charmingly cluttered flat is typical of this confident ensemble playing.

No characteristic Capra film would be complete without its demagogue or its final satirical scene of mass movement. Here, the figure of evil is a sharp-talking promoter (a harsh, edgy portrait by Keenan Wynn),

who plays up to his old friend until he realises that his main concern is money and the lack of it. Against the background of a gaudy dog-race track, with the Miami social set in full cry, Capra creates a typical set piece, with over-lapping dialogues and a screen full of jagged, gusty movement, beautifully captured in the camera-work of another veteran, William Daniels.

A Hole in the Head, then, is entirely professional entertainment in a familiar American style; it may not break any new ground, yet it is wholly alive and easily enjoyable. The final scenes—the reconciliation between father, son and attractive widow—perhaps belong to a more conventional tradition and are arbitrarily arrived at; but even the last minute decision of the staid, stolid elder brother to join the carefree vagabond life is so typically Capra in its joyous rejection of reality that one is really rather pleased when it happens. With the exception of the Keenan Wynn episode, there is little of the social moralising which made Capra a major spokesman for the American liberal spirit of the 1930's, for its fervent, sometimes muddle-headed New Deal optimism. But this, inevitably, is a film with a much lower ambition. Capra has clearly recognised the nature of his material and has contented himself with the opportunities afforded to rekindle his own world of wish fulfilment and sentimental fantasy. Always a shrewd showman, he has created a contemporary success-conscious hero who, for better or worse, probably suits the present mood as well as Mr. Deeds did that of more than twenty years ago. Deeds will remain longer in the memory; yet, in an age when the average Hollywood product is notable for its numbing anonymity, we should be grateful that he has been able to invest a relatively minor work with so much of his former panache.

Capra is not the only veteran to make a recent creative comeback, although he has remained silent for longer than the others—during the intervening years, he made science documentaries for television. The latest films of Ford, Hitchcock, Hawks and a few others confirm that some of the older generation have weathered the current Hollywood crisis, in a period when America is slowly losing her position as a dominant film power; and it is to these resilient survivors that this article is dedicated. But in order to see how this crisis has affected the entire structure and personality of the industry, one must look back to a more prosperous era, to the years before survival became a real issue.

2

1945-46. The Second World War was over, the major studios were returning to full production and the conscripted directors and actors were putting away uniforms and preparing to resume broken careers. In this atmosphere, Samuel Goldwyn and William Wyler made *The Best Years of Our Lives*; and today, despite its sentimental excesses, it still retains its vivid response to that post-war mood when old ideas were being challenged and new ones tested. The extent and range of available talent at this time can be seen in the following breakdown of prominent directors. Of the older veterans, some were nearing the end of their creative careers (Bacon, Fleming, Keighley, Lloyd, Lubitsch, Sam Wood). Others remained firmly on the active list: Capra, Curtiz, Dieterle, Ford, Hathaway, Hawks, Hitchcock, King, Lang, LeRoy, McCarey, Milestone, King Vidor, Wellman, Wyler—



a roster of Hollywood's dependable long-term talents. Those who had made, or were making, their names in America included Dassin, Kazan, Mankiewicz, Anthony Mann, Minnelli, Preminger, Preston Sturges, Welles, Wilder, Wise and Zinnemann. It is not surprising that these immediate post-war years seemed full of promise. It was the era of documentary realism, the taut location thriller, the journalistic social document (*Crossfire*, *Call Northside 777*, *The Set Up*, *Boomerang*, and Capra's own brilliant *State of the Union*). It was the period when film-makers came back from the war to take a new look at their own domestic scene, to find a firmer, less glamorised response to people and characterisation.

But that was more than ten years ago. Looking back over this period, one realises that Hollywood has since passed through more radical (and disastrous) phases than at any other time in its history. The Un-American Activities Committee, for example, successfully drained off creative talent and corrupted the artistic climate for several years after its initial hearings. Many of those affected, like Dmytryk, Abraham Polonsky and John Berry, never recovered their former stimulus; and something vital disappeared from the American cinema when the independent spirit yielded to conformism. As the 1950's progressed, economic pressure vied with political expediency as the paramount talking point. The one-eyed monster of television was beginning to snatch away an audience hitherto considered untouchable. At the same time, the European and Asian cinemas were attracting a new kind of audience for a new kind of film, thus refuting the long-held view of Hollywood commercialism that the American film had a sovereign right to dominate all the screens of the world.

This battle, which still continues, is clearly manifest in the industry's desperate and often debased attempts to hold its audiences through a constant vulgarisation of subject matter and a faith in fabulously expensive blockbusters on ever widening screens. In these circumstances, it is not surprising that the personal film has become even more difficult to achieve. In a time of crisis, the director with a developed artistic personality may be faced with the prospect of retirement or compromise. Many of those mentioned earlier (Hathaway, Dieterle, Wellman and others) have slowly succumbed, due, in part at least, to a lack of suitable subjects. In any case, few of the veterans were likely to adapt themselves to Hollywood's unrestrained onslaught on the teenage market with its combination of horror, science fiction and beat generation gimmicks. Others have faltered owing to the absence of the kind of star material available in the 1930's. The successful commercial films of directors like Clarence Brown or George Cukor owed much to Hollywood's cult of personality: Garbo, Hepburn and other starry lights of the Dream Factory. Since the war, Brown has had only one substantial success (*Intruder in the Dust*); and Cukor, although he has added to his list of enjoyable theatrical comedies, has managed nothing of real note since his *A Star is Born*, itself a tribute to a surviving star in the grand manner.

The effects of internal or external pressures have made themselves felt in the work of other formerly significant names. Anatole Litvak's last production, *The Journey*, revealed the souring of a liberal and intelligent talent. Leo

Capra through three decades. Above: "You Can't Take It With You" (1938); centre: "State of the Union" (1948); below: "A Hole in the Head", which marks his return to the cinema.

McCarey, who seven years ago made one of the most dangerous of the anti-Communist sagas in *My Son John*, has recently returned, though not very happily, to the comedy field. Michael Curtiz, one of Hollywood's most glossy craftsmen, with a reputation for being able to handle any given subject, has lately shown a lack of interest in almost everything—the small virtues of his *The Hangman* were traceable to the script of another veteran, Dudley Nichols. Another European immigrant, Fritz Lang, achieved a few post-war successes only to fade away into routine thrillers; he has now returned to Germany and is there remaking some of his silent scripts, apparently with disastrous results. The long (and often inexplicable) career of King Vidor has taken him from pre-war social realism to a kind of post-war lunacy in films like *The Fountainhead* and *Ruby Gentry*; recently he turned to fashionable spectacles (*War and Peace*) and, not surprisingly, failed to respond. George Stevens' development must be placed slightly apart from the others, since films like *A Place in the Sun* and *Giant* have been much larger in scope than anything he attempted previously. But style is of little use when the subject is beyond its creator's imaginative range; consequently *The Diary of Anne Frank* fell a victim to Hollywood's craze for overblown portentousness as well as to its general miscasting. In a way, the sad failure of this film seems to sum up a whole epoch of Hollywood thinking.

3

How, meanwhile, has the younger generation been faring? The early films of Huston, Ray, Dassin, Wilder and Wise possessed a recognisably American technical adroitness as well as reflecting the violent restlessness of the society from which they came. Now, in the late 1950's, this whole American post-war generation seems broken up, its members scattered all over the world. Some are making films with exotic locations and foreign stars in yet another attempt to provide a TV-locked audience with a colourful, big screen eyeful. These productions, though they may have a certain cosmopolitan appeal, inevitably become progressively less American in feeling; and experience has shown that American directors are at their best on their home ground. This was demonstrably true in the case of an artist like the late Preston Sturges, one of the cinema's most brilliant satirists, whose sad post-war progress culminated in a comparative failure made in France and subsequent silence. Others appear to have left Hollywood for good, while Huston, Mankiewicz, Aldrich and Ray have wandered from country to country making a variety of subjects not always suited to their talents. The one influential director who has remained resolutely at home is Elia Kazan, and it seems significant that even he has not made a film for more than two years.

The peculiar problems and difficulties of post-war Hollywood have also affected those producers whose sheer professional knowledge and acumen have kept them in business for twenty or thirty years, despite changing fashions in politics, entertainment, exhibition policies and screen sizes. There is something almost gallant, in fact, in the way Sam Goldwyn has recently pinned his faith in a mammoth production of *Porgy and Bess*—hoping, presumably, that it will appeal to contemporary taste as much as *Dead End* answered the post-Depression mood of the 1930's. Sacrifices have had to be made, of course. Policy-making producers are subject to the whims of fashion as well as directors; and in the field of serious social drama, vulgarisation and compromise have affected even the most powerful. Nowadays, it is a little difficult to believe that Darryl F. Zanuck once produced *The*

Grapes of Wrath; and even more difficult to understand why David O. Selznick, having surrounded himself with a polyglot and mutually incompatible array of talents for *A Farewell to Arms*, should have expected it to work. One of the old social crusaders, Walter Wanger, has however still managed to bring off the occasional half-success: *Riot in Cell Block 11*, for instance, or the best parts of *I Want To Live*, which somehow survive the fashionably jazzy and overwrought manner of presentation.

4

Altogether, this decade in Hollywood has been one of unease, insecurity, personal and creative uncertainty. Consequently it is now rare for Hollywood to commit itself to a weighty, socially responsible theme or a great subject. When it does so, it almost invariably veers towards mere portentousness, or a preoccupation with production values at the expense of content. A not unintelligent, very carefully made prestige production like *The Nun's Story* stops short of vulgarisation yet founders finally under its own weight and, more precisely, its lack of a strongly expressed personal attitude. A Bresson or a Buñuel, given this theme, would not have hesitated to explore its ultimate implications; a Hollywood director of 1959, however honest and talented, could scarcely be expected to attempt them.

All this is probably inevitable in a highly commercialised and competitive industry passing through a severe economic recession. But if Hollywood at present seems unable to produce works of lasting value, it appears to have recovered its talent for enjoyable, sometimes civilised, entertainment pictures with only mild intellectual pretensions but with a marked professional expertise. Recently, we have begun to see a renewed concentration on what the industry has always thought of as its family pictures—large-scale Westerns and outdoor dramas, comedy romances and thrillers laced with a contemporary element of intrigue. Not unnaturally, these have attracted veterans such as Ford, Capra, Hawks, Hitchcock and King, who have been working variations on these themes for many years and who, unlike their colleagues mentioned earlier on, have retained the kind of professional flair and authority essential for box-office success. These

Howard Hawks' "*Rio Bravo*": "... action whose very terseness makes it the more effective".





"North by Northwest": "terror striking from the most unlikely surroundings and in the least expected forms."

are the true survivors, and at the moment it looks as though they have the field to themselves. The younger directors have other preoccupations; they could hardly be expected to respond powerfully to a style of film-making which owed its inspiration to the more relaxed and confident conditions of twenty years ago. The strong degree of independence now enjoyed by the major producer-directors, many of whom maintain their own companies, has also strengthened their position within the industry.

Many directors understandably prefer to work with old and trusted associates: Ford, for instance, gathered together a marvellous cast of veteran character players for *The Last Hurrah*, with its vivid mixture of old-fashioned idealism and sentimental nostalgia. Though their material has its roots in the past, most of the artists I am concerned with here have equally retained their shrewd awareness of an audience's expectations: they know better than to disregard the teenage public, so that *A Hole in the Head* has its bongo drums and "beat" slang and *Rio Bravo* its Ricky Nelson ballads.

Of all the classic American styles, the Western has probably passed through more varied phases than any other. At present, acute psychological disorders, as much as Indians and outlaws, are among the hazards the Western hero has to contend with. Yet, despite these often unwelcome complications, the old fascination remains: here is a safe and well-tried world where the experienced craftsman can feel entirely at home—and among friends.

Perhaps the most striking aspect of John Ford's new Civil War Western, *The Horse Soldiers*, is its attitude towards the

war itself. Amongst all the paraphernalia of battle, with its blazing bugles and daring cavalry charges, there is a sharp awareness of the aftermath in terms of pain, blood, terror, and the moral bitterness inseparable from any civil conflict. All this is interlarded with some pawky humour and a spasmodic romance between a rebellious Southern belle and a cavalry hero fashionably afflicted with a psychological hatred of doctors. Most of the elements of latter-day Ford are present in bewildering profusion, in fact—and yet the familiar magic works again. Ford's response to the spirit of his material can be found in the way each episode is composed (often in terms of the silent cinema), in the rich, romantic images of horsemen passing through fields and rivers, and in the masterly way in which the battle scenes, such as the attack on Newton Station, are grouped and constructed. Never ostentatiously composed, these images possess the strength and clarity of Ford's most personal films, such as *Wagonmaster* and *The Young Mr. Lincoln*. With all its perverse changes of mood, this is unmistakably the work of an artist who has never lost his instinctive response to the medium he has served for forty years.

Watching these films by directors of Ford's generation makes one realise how the years of professional, practical experience tell in their work—in the freshening up of variable scripts or done-to-death subjects. An unerring judgment for the right kind of camera set-up gives their films a visual distinction not easily achieved by the more technically conscious younger generation. Henry King's *The Bravados*, for instance, is a violent, only medium quality Western handicapped by some excessively maudlin religious sentiment; yet it is always alive and compelling to look at. Even when one acknowledges the differences in tone and content, the feeling for landscape and the open air is not so far removed from the spirit of *Tol'able David*, among the most beautiful of all American films and directed by King nearly forty years ago. (It is regrettable, incidentally, that this director so rarely finds a subject which interests him throughout; his latest, *This Earth is Mine!*, is a lethargic family chronicle with perhaps two or three scenes hinting at a degree of personal involvement.)

Although Howard Hawks has returned to Western themes less often than Ford, his ventures into this territory possess a distinctive quality of their own, with less mellowness and rather more acid. His recent *Rio Bravo* is a long, leisurely affair which mixes most of the standard ingredients—very black villains, a stalwart sheriff hero, a frightened community—and erupts suddenly into fierce action whose very terseness makes it all the more effective. Aided by clear-cut characterisation, the old Western myths survive through Hawks' deceptively relaxed direction; and the atmosphere of his little town is enhanced by a precise geographical placing of the action. William Wyler's *The Big Country*, on the other hand, is even longer and more conscious of its size and prestige. Wyler's later work has become increasingly academic in tone, and his formidable capacity for careful craftsmanship now seems to dominate other aspects of his talent: survival, for him, might appear to have involved a certain withdrawal.

Reminders of earlier methods and inspirations can be found outside the Western theme, in the latest films of directors such as Billy Wilder and Alfred Hitchcock. In many of his later works, Hitchcock's unique talent for wringing the nerves of his audience has become a little lost amidst a welter of romantic flummery and over-blown effects. His *North by Northwest* still suffers from excessive length; there are the familiar inflated close-up love scenes and a tiresome

woman of mystery (is she or isn't she a spy?). Nevertheless, the film marks a return to a more strongly personal style, with terror striking from the most unlikely surroundings and in the least expected forms. Again, much of its mixture of old-fashioned suspense and double-cross works because Hitchcock knows exactly how to arrange his effects—the murder in the U.N., for instance, and the strafing plane sequence. Sometimes he pushes an incident a little too far, then recovers by pulling a trick out of the bag, and ends up with a cliff-hanging climax whose very ludicrousness suggests that the Old Master has not lost his special talent for self-parody.

Parody of another kind makes Billy Wilder's *Some Like It Hot* his most uninhibitedly and raucously vulgar comedy to date. Determinedly German in its leering awareness of the perils of female impersonation, it recalls the hard sophistication of Wilder's pre-war scripts and, unlike his recent lukewarm romantic fables, has an engagingly dark humour all its own. With its private film jokes, its brilliant performance by Jack Lemmon, and the funniest fade-out line in years, *Some Like It Hot* has that terse, intimate ruthlessness characteristic equally of its director and of a type of comedy one thought Hollywood had forgotten.

5

A last example is far removed from the Western, comedy or thriller, the three genres into which the American cinema has poured so much money and talent. The war film, with its inflated heroics and coarse sensationalism, is now almost equally firmly established as part of Hollywood's staple diet. But the American cinema's compromised treatment of this subject is part of its whole, hesitant attitude towards the contemporary scene. Lewis Milestone's "war" career provides an acute example, when one considers the marked shifts of viewpoint between the raw pacifism of *All Quiet*, the compassionate acceptance of *A Walk in the Sun* and the sentimental jingoism of *Halls of Montezuma*. *Pork Chop Hill*, the film with which Milestone returned to the American cinema after several years of inconclusive work in England and Italy, displays more creative drive and control than any of his recent pictures, yet presents us with a new enigma: a film whose images tell a different story from the words. From the very outset, these images communicate Milestone's highly distinctive view of battle: once again, there are the great tracking shots across grey, desiccated landscapes; some trench groupings are identical to those of *A Walk in the Sun*; and there are many small but recognisably personal touches, such as the soldier lamenting over the body of his friend, or the cold faces of the men as they grudgingly watch the empty transports returning to the rear areas.

Then, as the film progresses, so do the doubts. The story, set at the time of the Panmunjom peace negotiations in Korea, makes a point of the uselessness of *Pork Chop Hill*: the war is nearly over, but both sides must strive to hold it, if only to save face. For the American unit's leader, it is a symbol of what his men have been fighting for; as for the negotiating generals, the situation is complicated by dark political hatreds. There are many conflicting allegiances, in fact; but none is emphatically stated, except the necessity for heroism, honour, and duty, expressed in an uneven and equivocal script. Also, the film admits some inexcusable clichés which seem quite alien to Milestone's sombre pre-

sensation. In particular, the cowardly Negro who, revived by a quick pep talk, is greeted with a brusque "welcome back to the club," belongs to another and painfully familiar type of war fiction.

As it was produced by Gregory Peck's own company, the film presumably is what he wanted. Nevertheless, it seems legitimate to speculate on whether it is entirely what Milestone wanted. Judged purely as a piece of film-making, it is clearly the work of an old professional. And the last image of the unit, begrimed and dead on its feet, staggering down the hill, seems entirely worthy of its creator. Why, then, do the preceding scenes and the final commentary contrive to soften and distort what this image is telling us? We want to like its creators, and we would like to know.

6

In this article, I have tried to suggest reasons for the decline of so many of Hollywood's most talented artists, and to show how resilience and sheer professional know-how have simultaneously enabled others to retain their recognisably individual qualities as artists. I have mentioned only a proportion of those who have found themselves unable to respond to the current commercial pattern; others (like Milestone) have retained their technical prowess at the cost of some earlier convictions. In view of the fact that the younger generation is so scattered and, more important, so unequal in creative range, there appear to be few replacements available when the still active veterans finally disappear. This is not to deny the presence of several potentially important and talented artists—Kubrick, Lumet, Kramer, Ritt, the younger television writers and directors—but have they the same staying power?

Hollywood, though, is often a law unto itself—it has taken some hard knocks in its time and has always refused to go down for the full count. Nevertheless, it seems to me that we are nearing the end of an era in which the veteran craftsmen, at any rate, are trying to revive Hollywood's familiar traditions with some of their former vigour and style. In his notes for *The Last Tycoon*, Scott Fitzgerald remarked that "there are no second acts in American lives." For many artists in the American cinema, the curtain fell irrevocably after the first act, whilst a tenacious few have achieved a second or even a third. Let us praise and encourage these survivors—before the theatre goes dark on them for ever.



Gregory Peck in "Pork Chop Hill".



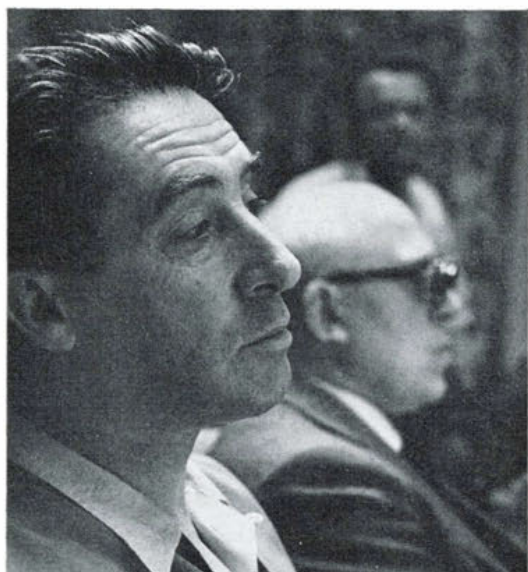
The Changing Screen.

ABOVE : *Chapaev* :
“ . . . Man always
loved . . . ”

LEFT : *The End of
St. Petersburg* :
“ . . . It is the scale
on which vital
matters are dealt
with that distinguishes
the deep humanity
of the classics from
mass produced
‘humanism’ .”

Deep Screen

GRIGORY KOZINTSEV



Kozintsev (left) and Zavattini at the Karlovy Vary Festival.

Born in 1905, Grigory Kozintsev began work in the theatre in 1919 with L. Trauberg. In 1922 they organised the studio FEX (Factory of the Eccentric Actor), one of whose members was Sergei Youtkevich. In 1924, the FEX artists began work in the cinema with the experimental comedy "The Adventures of an October Child." Kozintsev's main pre-war films, made in collaboration with Trauberg, were "The Cloak" (1926, after Gogol), "Little Brother" (1927), "The New Babylon" (1929), "Alone" (1931), "The Youth of Maxim" (1935), "The Return of Maxim" (1937) and "The Viborg Side" (1938). Two years ago he directed a CinemaScope version of "Don Quixote," with Nikolai Cherkassov—extracts of whose diary on the making of the film appeared in the same number of SIGHT AND SOUND as "The Critical Issue", which the author here refers to.

I RECENTLY READ THE twenty-fifth anniversary number of SIGHT AND SOUND. In its leading article, *The Critical Issue*, four English critics held a round-table discussion on the contemporary cinema. Reading it made me want to take part in their discussion round a larger table. I know that all too often the ways and creeds of artists diverge, yet today

many things bring together people for whom the cause of culture is incompatible with cold war and international hatreds. What we need is a frank exchange of views.

A good film is not the success of its makers alone, but for all cinema. A film is born in dispute; in resolute dissent and resolute assertion. The director's efforts concern everyone, and it is up to everyone whether the effort is continued or spends its force.

I clearly recall the day when Pudovkin showed me *The End of St. Petersburg* in a small private cinema. I couldn't recognise the screen: it had changed. I saw huge buildings I hadn't seen before and people who seemed cast in bronze. Monuments too—everything appeared somehow changed, more solid, and all because of this new screen.

I have watched the screen change since, many times. There were the comic epics of Chaplin; then the irony and lyricism of Clair. Laurence Olivier proved that Shakespeare wrote his tragedies especially for the cinema. New horizons kept opening up, new talents, and with them controversy unfolded on the screen. Cinema did more than bring audiences together; it brought together the film-makers of the world. In Belgium I shook hands with Juan-Antonio Bardem. We had already met, however—I had seen him on the screen in the Soviet Union; he had seen me in France. On the jury at Karlovy Vary I met Cesare Zavattini, another old friend I had never talked to before. Together with Françoise Rosay (whom I knew long before I set eyes on her) and Czech, Chinese, Polish, German and Hungarian friends, we voted for Myozi Iyeki, the Japanese producer. It is with artists such as these, and the others we have not yet met, that my colleagues and I should like to discuss the future of the cinema.

1

I once wanted Dovzhenko's opinion of a certain film, and asked him whether he had seen it. "I'm not sure," he said, "whether I saw the one you mean, but I've certainly seen one like it . . ."

This still strikes me as a diagnosis of the ailment cinema suffers from in many countries. I am thinking in particular of recent international festivals. People often admire this film or that, but rarely seem to voice an admiration for cinema itself. The warmth of summer, which is when festivals are usually held, scarcely seems to infiltrate the screen: instead, one sees a feeble, mechanically produced imitation of warmth, a synthetic humanity.

When an industrial invention is perfected, and mass production begins, the move is a progressive one since it is followed by cheaper production. In art, on the other hand, the transition is fatal. Mass production kills the very essence of art. And yet more and more films seem to be coming off an assembly line. They could easily be numbered. If you haven't seen one, you've seen hundreds like it. Their directors no longer create. They do little more than assemble pre-fabricated sets and standard parts, which then pass in review on the screen—the star actress, the wisecracks, the immutable ritual of physical combat and the moody landscape.

At one time this applied chiefly to cowboy pictures and musicals with half-dressed chorus girls. These, however, were commercial, they made no cultural claims. But mass production did not end there. New models appeared—and still appear. Critics keep complaining about it. Unfortunately their complaints, in most cases, are no less stereotyped: mass production criticism applied to mass production art. Cybernetics, in fact.

Commercialism has put humanity on the conveyor belt. It has learnt to imitate humanity the way furs are imitated and the way that roses made of nylon smell almost like real roses. Yet it is the "almost real" that is repellent in art. And the invention of it has its own history.

The second World War encouraged film-makers almost everywhere to turn to real life. It was hard not to, when the ruins of bombed buildings stood out in black relief and there were long lines of unemployed. False standards could tell nothing worth hearing of all that people had gone through. The old, gilded box-office hits turned out to be loud fakes in modern dress incapable of rousing an audience. And so the film-makers of many countries turned to realism.

They produced much that was valuable. I shall write about it later on. But soon falsifications appeared. The difficulty with realism is that it is sometimes little more than "almost realism." Imitations of it are not too difficult, and soon the method of reflecting reality becomes stylisation. Nowadays films are often styled in the realistic vein, just as they might well be styled after 18th century prints or late 19th century photographs. The art of imitation has in our day achieved near-perfection. When imitating paintings, the expert reproduces not only the brush strokes, but even the surface and texture of the canvas: what you see is just like Rembrandt.

No wonder, then, that directors draw so much attention to outward appearances: to this actress's face, her eyes slightly swollen with tears. She is forty. The operator emphasises her wrinkles with lighting effects. She is not a star but an ordinary, ageing woman, an actress faithfully reproducing the unalluring sight of passion. She, and the film-makers, indicate in this way that the passion of an ageing lady is not attractive. They bring out her wrinkles and dwell on all the details. They imitate the surface of the canvas. And critics who like the film are charmed by its simplicity and naturalness.

Yet A. P. Lensky, whom Stanislavsky considered one of his teachers, wrote of an actor who had lost his gift: "Naturalness and distressing simplicity have come into his acting, which are worse than thievery."

Simplicity and naturalism are attributes of true art, but they are not identified with outward details. What simplicity is there, for example, in Dovzhenko's *Earth*, and what naturalness in Chaplin's walk? But their films, which mirror environment in their own special way, can scarcely be termed unreal or untruthful.

The trouble with many pictures produced in the last few years is not that they lack simplicity and naturalness. It is other and more crucial qualities that they lack: the depth and complexity of living, which can never be simulated.

2

I should like to fathom the attributes of true art, to trace its conversion into tradition and stereotype.

In one of his articles, thinking back to his mother, Charlie Chaplin described how she stood for hours looking out of the window at the blind alley near the Kennington Road. All she saw was mirrored in her face, in her mimicry. Watching her, Chaplin learned what characters passed under the window, and what had happened to them that day. Chaplin inherited both her mimicry and her keen eye. The only differ-

ence was that he looked out of another window. Instead of a poor London alley frequented by the same people day in and day out, he saw the life of his time. His genius reflected what he observed—unemployment, crisis, war and fascism. His epoch, in fact.

Chaplin had many imitators. They tried to dissect his art and put the parts on the conveyor belt, but nothing came of their efforts. There were funnier clowns than he, and more versatile acrobats, but there was nothing in them to match the essential Chaplin.

Talent is not just the spiritual pattern of the artist, nor the degree of his perception. An artist is always like a seismograph, recording the inner shocks of his epoch.

Chaplin's imitators were easily able to produce series and variations of comic situations, but they were lost when it came to conveying his sense of reality. Without the main thing, the perspective, there was nothing left but slapstick.

Maxim Gorky wrote to Leonid Andreyev, then still a young writer: "You have the talent. All you need now is suffering, so your talent will mature." The suffering that tempers talent is sympathy, the gift of perceiving the pain of others, of perceiving it as one's own. Chaplin had that gift.

People often think back today to the forceful plastic art of Eisenstein, to the "cinema idiom" of his films. His discoveries in that field were indeed great, but what comes to mind first about him is the scale of his approach. To appreciate his innovations, one must understand what he aimed at. He aimed at forms not of mere entertainment but of impressiveness: what he wanted to show were the big popular movements, as they really were, in all their might and purpose. Like every great artist he never used make-up. His urge to speak in images expressing the new processes of life sprang from reality itself.

Eisenstein's films enjoyed world-wide fame. Quite a number of directors developed under their influence. Aside from influence, there was also fashion. Studios wanted to put his "Russian editing" on the conveyor. But cinema idiom divorced from thought degenerated into mass-production mannerism. Even scenes shot by Eisenstein himself lost



"The art of casual exploration of the ordinary man." Sophia Loren (centre) in de Sica's *Oro di Napoli*.



"Poverty is photogenic . . . and episodes from life have become settings for sentimental anecdotes . . ." Sophia Loren in "Scandal in Sorrento", filmed in CinemaScope and colour.

their force when deprived of the controlling and connecting idea. Sequences of *Que Viva Mexico!* were sold piecemeal, and the outcome of the transaction was in no way happy. It was suggested that the buyers had been poor editors, not as good as Eisenstein. But what they lacked was Eisenstein's vision.

The Italians discovered new aspects in reality. There was amazing humanity about their neo-realist films, because everything in them was usual—and yet unusual. As usual as everyday life, and as unusual as it shaped out in post-war Italy. The collision of contemporary paradoxes stood revealed in the light of simple happenings. The scale and force of these paradoxes made the conventional dramaturgical conflicts impossible. The labourer's search for happiness didn't depend on whether the boss was kind or unkind, but on what can only be described as inner dramatism. Cesare Zavattini discovered the art of casual exploration of the ordinary man, the man who wants to exist sensibly in an insensible social milieu. And although there was hope for a couple of pence, that two pennyworth was coined of real gold.

A few years have passed and the experiments of de Sica, de Filippo, Castellani and de Santis have become part of modern culture. Yet the collective effort of Italy's cinema has suddenly spent its force. The range of its vision has not expanded. It is repeating itself, and the field lies bare. Its epigoni have simply discovered that poverty is photogenic, that a shabby wall has its own aestheticism, and washing hung out to dry its own decorative chic. Episodes from life explored without depth have become settings for sentimental anecdotes. An unemployed man showered with solicitude has become a melodramatic hero.

Far be it from me to criticise established film-makers for isolated failures. I appreciate the difficulties of working in present-day circumstances. I have been told of studios bought up by foreign companies, and of unsympathetic censors. But it seems to me that there are other factors. Times have

changed, and to reflect them a new and different quality is needed.

I say this also because in many countries directors who are not hemmed in by the difficulties experienced by Italian film-makers, have themselves put the methods of neo-realism on the conveyor belt.

3

There was a show of the twelve best films of all time at the World Fair in Brussels last year. The jury was to award the best with a gold medal. But many hours of argument failed to bring agreement. The big prize was withheld. *Battleship Potemkin*, *The Gold Rush*, *Mother*, *Bicycle Thieves*, *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* and *La Grande Illusion* got the most votes.

The performances were instructive. The enduring quality of art and the weakness of imitation came patently to the surface. Many people compared not only the old pictures and the new, but also the very level of modern art with the art of those days. And there was the pervading thought that if we then had genuine cinema, the modes of expression of that experimental period were perhaps necessary today as well.

I recall the scene in *A King in New York* in which the king had a plastic operation and his face took on the quality of unnatural, somewhat frightening artificial youth. When I see shots in trick perspective and quick-changing montage effects, I can't help thinking of that rejuvenated face. No, it wasn't a return to youth, but an imitation of something that could never return.

It is good to think back affectionately to one's youth, but not good to fall into the ways of second childhood.

It was not by imitating Eisenstein that the Vassiliev's achieved something new in cinema with *Chapaev*, a film that learned from *Potemkin* yet rejected many aspects of Eisenstein's aesthetics. That is the only way a genuine tradition can stay alive. In *Chapaev* art reflected more than just the scale of historic events. It reflected the changes in the inner pattern of the soul.

The fighting cavalryman has travelled many roads. He reined in his horse wherever people were in trouble. He visited Madrid and galloped by against the background of the burning Reichstag. People fought for their freedom inspired by the thought of him and kids played Chapaev in every backyard. That was worth the Festival prizes.

But could a modern *Chapaev* be created? No, that would be little more than imitation—a dead, rejuvenated face devoid of the life that had at one time inspired it. What had made the film live was its sense of time.

What is this sense of time that keeps returning to our minds? After all, man always loved, hated, had children and died. And it is just this everyday life that has always roused audiences. That, it would seem, is the secret of humanity. Touch upon these eternal themes and warmth will infiltrate the auditorium from the screen.

In each epoch, however, the eternal themes acquire new features and fill out with new content. The love of Romeo and Juliet could never have bloomed in art without the feud of the Montagues and Capulets. Anna Karenina is driven to suicide not only by the despair of love, but by her time. Even Falstaff's appetite for capon's legs and sack came into conflict with the statesmanship of King Henry V. Yet Falstaff did not cease to entertain people when feudalism came to an end, and his character lost nothing of its human quality.

Preoccupation with the eternal merely leads to the pretentious, and a production conceived as eternal usually fades into oblivion very quickly. While everything in which the sheer force of art has perpetuated the day, lives on through the years. It is scarcely possible to imitate Shakespeare's metaphor and hyperbole in our day, but the effort to learn from Shakespeare how to express true to life conflicts and probe the depths of historical processes should never come to an end. Truth itself, rather than its likeness, will never come out unless the artist discovers how the current of life passes through human hearts. It is then that art is enriched not only with observation, but with thought.

The fencing lesson in Iyeki's *Stepbrothers* (to which we awarded the joint Grand Prix at Karlovy Vary in 1958), when the child is incapable of mastering the ancient and sinister ritual of murder, is a scene one finds hard to forget. It is not just a portrayal of the samurai's way of life, but a symbol of the clash of epochs in modern Japan. The joyless gaiety of *Bachelor Party* evokes a sense of general division—of man's solitude among the clamouring noises of an American city. It shows that people have a devilishly hard time living. This same idea about the terrors of existence in spiritual solitude leading to violence is expressed by different means in Bardem's *Main Street*; there is keen observation and perception behind its images. Sometimes things appear utterly futile. But a hint of faith in a different future can be filled with forceful poetry, like Giulietta Masina's barely perceptible smile at the end of *Nights of Cabiria*.

Art always speaks of man, and man does not exist in a vacuum. Man and man, man and tribe, man and society, man and mankind—each of these inseparable components

is always specific, for time is forever amending "eternal relations," giving them new shape.

Furthermore, this is not the time for avoiding truth. Dostoevsky wrote of "all-connecting thought," without which mankind could not live on. And lacking an answer to what this thought actually is that infuses human activity with meaning, an artist has a hard time being an artist. After all, it is not very interesting to live by outer observation alone.

4

It is the scale on which vital matters are dealt with that distinguishes the deep humanity of the classics from mass-produced "humanism." That is the thing such different films as *Mother*, *The Gold Rush* and *Bicycle Thieves* have in common. The fate of humanism lies behind the fate of their people. And that is the reason why people will not soon forget the old woman from the factory slums, the tramp who has no place in the gold rush, and the father who steals to feed his son.

Again, an ordinary baby carriage with a sleeping child rises before people's eyes as it rolls down the Odessa Steps amidst rifle shots, corpses and an insane massacre. It rolls down—not merely a reminder of 1905, but a warning. The rifles the tsarist soldiers used against the people are long since rusty, but the baby carriage keeps rolling down, and the black mushroom of atomic explosions threatens to engulf the child that sleeps in it. The *Potemkin* technique is obsolete, yet its living blood still lends warmth to the film.

Cinema has made a big leap forward. It has sound and colour. Its lens has added scope. CinemaScope has been followed by Cinerama and finally, in Brussels, by Circarama. But at times we have seen the breadth of vision widen technically and contract spiritually.

Affording the filmgoer a breathtaking ride across cities and oceans, Cinerama has failed to tell him the least thing about the world; while Circarama, which made him twist his neck, and squeal, and feel sea-sick, has taken the cinema back to its origins—the mechanical peep-show.

I have every faith in the future of these new technical facilities. But, thinking of them, I hope for a different type of cinema—a cinema of deep screen. Our age has to come to life on it, not just outwardly, but in the very substance of its human processes.

During the first World War, young Mayakovsky said that anything a master writes must not simply be well-written, but "written by the war." To write "contemporaneously" is the duty of any master.

The impact of film art is tremendous. It is sad to see it wasted on commonplaces, criminal to apply it to man's detriment for the propaganda of hate among nations. Dear friends of our difficult and splendid occupation, let us discuss at a round table how to focus all the force of cinema art on defending man and mankind, progress and peace.



Boris Chirkov and V. Kibadina in "The Youth of Maxim". Made in 1935, this was the first film of a trilogy in which Trauberg and Kozintsev traced a young workman's education in life and politics.



"Mon Oncle" : Jacques Tati confronts the machine age

Conscience and Comedy

PENELOPE HOUSTON

"I suspect . . . Sturges feels that conscience and comedy are incompatible. It would be hard for a man of talent to make a more self-destructive mistake."—JAMES AGE

AUDACITY, AN IRREVERENT, autocratic independence that looks far beyond any questions of good or bad taste, is the second essential quality of the comic artist. (The first, it goes without saying, is the comedian's eye, the sense of incongruities, of the grotesque contrasts between appearance and fact, aspirations and actualities, which are inseparable from humour.) It is a long time, though, since the cinema encouraged audacity in its artists, allowed Sturges to play havoc with some cherished American myths, Chaplin to film

a comedy of murder, Wellman and Hecht to find *Nothing Sacred*, and the Marx Brothers to explode in anarchy. Most current screen comedies are content to set up their neat little targets—commercial television, small town customs, service life, bureaucracy—retire to a safe distance and pepper them with small arms fire. Since Chaplin abdicated—and after *A King in New York* one suspects that, whatever he may give us in future, it can never again be a great comedy—there has been no one who has made comedies because he could do nothing else, because his view of the world expressed and defined itself in terms of a laughter part defiant, part sad, part joyful: and wholly responsible.

No one, that is, except Jacques Tati. Tall, lugubrious, with a nervous geniality and mackintosh air of perpetual caution, Tati has built for himself a screen personality that is consciously in the great tradition. It is, one feels, a deliberate act of creation—almost of manufacture. Chaplin's optimism, Keaton's sceptical tolerance, Langdon's mooning innocence, were all expressions of personalities which could be visualised in no other way. With Tati, there is a sense that the loping, stiff-legged walk, the mackintosh and the pipe, are brought out for the occasion; that the awkward hesitancy is assumed as a disguise by a very practical intelligence; and that over the shoulder of Tati the comedian watch the appraising, speculative eyes of Tati the director. One thing in his characterisation, however, rings entirely true: his avoidance of speech, with all it implies of a human involvement. There is something detached, austere, unyielding, about the ostensibly soft and clumsy Hulot; and the comparisons French critics like to draw between Tati and Robert Bresson find here their firmest justification.

There is a magnificence, though, about the way in which this not very funny man has imposed the *idea* of himself as a comic personality. Hulot is funny, I suspect, because Jacques Tati tells us so; and Tati has cast himself at the centre of his films because for the purposes of what he wanted to do he needed such a character: needed him and found his way to him almost by an intellectual act of will. Certainly this would be in keeping with Tati's general approach to the problems of cinema. His latest picture, *Mon Oncle*, was made with all the independence he finds essential, and was the best part of a year in the cutting room. Yet it is edited with an autocratic disregard for appearance or effect. The big central party sequence, for instance, in which Mme. Arpel invites her brother to her concrete and plastic dream-house in the forlorn confidence that she can marry him off to a neighbour, would in other hands have built to a toppling height of fantasy. Tati lets the scene dawdle, revives it, becomes fascinated with the mechanics of a joke, lingers on an irrelevancy. His sense of timing, it sometimes seems, is not so much erratic or individual as virtually non-existent. Yet this take it or leave it confidence is fundamental to his whole approach to the cinema. In a machine age, it becomes immensely attractive; and when Tati repeats a joke, as he does so often, it is because to him it is irresistible.

Mon Oncle involves the dilapidated Hulot, living at the top of a tumbledown old house, in mild conflict with his sister and brother-in-law, with a house all push-buttons, porthole windows, breath-takingly uncomfortable furniture and open plan chilliness. In their flowerless garden, a blue metal fish rears its sad, cold head from a fountain; a jet of water spouts from its mouth when visitors arrive, is hastily extinguished if the caller turns out to be a tradesman. In the kitchen, their small boy sits waiting for his supper while his mother, rubber-gloved, boils an egg with the precision of a dentist preparing his instruments. When M. Arpel leaves for work, his wife pursues him with a duster, compulsively dabbing at his brief-case, his car door handle, trotting down the drive to give a few last wipes to the chromium, then waving her duster from the front gate like a banner of domestic solidarity.

For Hulot, life is made up of stray dogs, back-streets, the lazily vehement quarrels and commotions of the market place, the saunter through the little square to the café. And Tati, as always, is on the side of the slow, the impractical, the innocent. There are suggestions that Hulot must go down in defeat (all along the roads, the pile-drivers are tearing into the old buildings), but at the same time the satire is essentially casual. For him the Arpels' life, their house, their rainbow-coloured car, their plastics factory, scarcely hold an objective or dangerous existence: there remains the retreat into a real, casual world. When Hulot pays his disruptive visit to the plastics factory, for instance, he is still entirely untroubled

and uninvolved. The factory sequence has none of the nightmare inevitability of, say, Chaplin's in *Modern Times*.

This detachment is Tati's special quality as a comedian and director. He has taken, in this latest film, to shooting his own scenes quite extensively in long shot: *Mon Oncle* is not a Hulot extravagance but a work of rather larger purpose, and Hulot must not be encouraged to dominate it. But the title and the thread of narrative suggest something a little warmer. Hulot has a nephew, bored and perplexed in his parents' mechanised paradise, and Hulot's purpose, in so far as his aimlessness allows one, is to remind the child of gentler and kindlier possibilities. This demands a relationship; and relationships are factors Tati has not yet really tried to handle. Here, certainly, boy and uncle accept each other almost on sufferance. Tati, perhaps, would like to humanise Hulot, to show him not as a catalyst setting off a comic reaction, but a man with his own convictions. But there is something in his personality that resists the human encounter.

At the heart of his comedy lingers this sense of dryness and chilliness, of a man not quite sure where he stands. With the Arpels, he is on confident ground: they are innocents intoxicated with their world, for whom the only flaws are such mild social discomfitures as turning on the fountain for the wrong visitor, or being imprisoned in their garage by a door with an elaborate self-shutting mechanism. Almost everything that has to do with them is funny, sometimes extravagantly so, and in Mme. Arpel (Adrienne Servantie) Tati has created his most authentic character. Nothing in the film is more endearing than her bedazzled delight in her hideous house, her mild chagrin when, seeing her neighbour pedalling vigorously round her garden on something that looks like a cross between a tricycle and a lawn mower, she has to admit that "she keeps her house looking very nice." But whatever Tati may eventually decide to do with Hulot himself, he is here something of a faceless man. At the end of *Mon Oncle* he is packed off in an aeroplane, a man with no wants, no needs, no ambitions, no hopes; a predestined victim but, it would appear, a contented one.

There is no anger in Tati's comedy. He films the Arpel establishments in harsh, chilly lighting, contrasting with Hulot's warmer world; he finds aimless occupations engaging and purposeful, empty activity absurd; but he has no comment to make outside his own clearly defined limits. His comedy does not expand or spread itself into generalisation: it takes a series of jokes and plays with them. He is in the Keaton rather than the Chaplin tradition, though he lacks Keaton's sublime ease. But *Mon Oncle* is his most substantial film precisely because Tati has begun to look at the world a little sadly; and this has always been a quality of the gentle humorists.

2

Mon Oncle is the work of an artist who respects the function of laughter. For other sides of the coin, it is worth looking at three recent British comedies, two made by highly experienced producer-director teams, one by a relatively untried unit, and all potentially concerned, like Tati's film, with real subjects, not comic confectionery. For Tati it is the human and the impersonal; for *Lauder and Gilliat*, in *Left, Right and Centre*, it is love and Toryism versus love and Socialism; for the Boulting Brothers, in *I'm All Right, Jack*, it is big business versus the unions; and for Jack Arnold and his scriptwriters, in *The Mouse that Roared*, it is the pygmy versus the giant, a satire on power politics. Unlike Tati's, the three British films are all made with more or less overt commercial motives; and in two cases their determination to entertain is stamped all over them. The opportunities they create for themselves are for strictly contemporary satire.

The *Lauder and Gilliat* comedy is placid, staid, a piece of



"Mon Oncle": "... banner of domestic solidarity."

election year frivolity released a little out of its turn. The Tory by-election candidate (peer's nephew; ex-TV-panellist) and his socialist opponent (fishmonger's daughter; ex-London School of Economics) fall in love and let their campaigns go by the board. Their agents, professionalism affronted, unite to keep the defaulting candidates up to scratch. This, though, is a political comedy entirely, and carefully, devoid of political references. The most daring of its conclusions is that the platitudes of one side are indistinguishable from those of the other; and it finds it more profitably amusing to turn to Alastair Sim, an eccentrically miserly peer playing the stately home game with a gloating eye to his juke-box takings, than to pursue its mock election campaign. Ian Carmichael and Patricia Bredin are conventional light comedy leads labelled Tory and Socialist. It is from a TV-drugged housewife (Irene Handl), politely pleased to welcome a favourite panellist on her doorstep but infinitely agitated and suspicious when asked to give him her vote, that the film takes its most authentically funny moment.

Left, Right and Centre is casually professional; the Boulting Brothers' *I'm All Right, Jack* is altogether tougher, more piratical, more of the moment. It opens with a blare of rock 'n' roll and a scene in a nudist camp. It proceeds to an industrial world in which the employers are a gang of corrupt cynics, fomenting strike trouble in order to further a crooked arms deal with a dingy Middle Eastern diplomat, and the trade unionists are disinterested, workshy, exhaustively argumentative and entirely gullible. Ian Carmichael again plays the innocent flung into the jungle of corruption, with Margaret Rutherford and Dennis Price representing the established order. Peter Sellers, as a shop steward with a yearning to visit Russia ("all those cornfields, and ballet every evening"), a man who believes all the pamphlets, has half-mastered the jargon, but has the slightly cowed wistfulness of the unconfident dictator, gives a performance whose extreme cleverness is never in doubt, whatever one may think of its rightness. Irene Handl, again, is usefully present as his wife.

There is nothing evasive here. The Boultings know precisely what they are doing, and they lay into everything in sight: TV discussion programmes, nudist films, the press, advertising campaigns for detergents, time and motion studies, personnel management (represented by Terry-Thomas), class hostilities, and every conceivable aspect of a strike presented as lacking either motive or sense. Everything is given roughly equal weight, and it is all done with great confidence and as much vulgarity as it can get away with. Some of the targets are worth hitting, and the film will no doubt have a big popular success. But this is a picture made from no standpoint, other than the shoulder-shrugging confidence that everything is fair game. It looks like the work of soured liberals, men who have retired from the contest and are spending their time throwing stones at the players. The Boultings, no doubt, would argue that their main purpose was to entertain: if the public mood has become cynical enough to take this kind of comedy, then they are carrying out a purveyor's function in meeting a demand. They are the take-over bid experts of British films; and take-overs are in fashion. Yet they are denying the responsibility that the serious artist in comedy has traditionally been willing to assume: they take no risks, because they face no issues squarely; they hurt no one, because one jibe cancels out another; they are not social satirists, because they too overtly revel in the dislocations that give them something to laugh at. One would hate to share all their laughter.

After this, there seems something uncommonly fresh about Open Road's inexpert, ingenuous little comedy, *The Mouse that Roared*. The dignified torch bearer of the Columbia trademark skips apprehensively from her pedestal to introduce

the credits, and the film launches into a story based on a double fantasy. What would happen, it conjectures, if a state half the size of Liechtenstein decided to declare war on America, to reap the transparent benefits in aid and sympathy of being a defeated ex-enemy? And what would follow if the tiny state somehow managed during its campaign to acquire the world's most intimidating bomb, and the power that goes with it?

On paper this comedy must have looked infinitely promising. The little army, with its chain-mail and bows and arrows, marches creakily among the New York skyscrapers; the prisoners are brought back to a royal welcome, only impaired when their general (in one of the neater *Kwai* parodies) petulantly demands the regulation-sized cell and the regulation tin plate; the world's ambassadors, assembling on the frontier, pass the time playing Diplomacy, their sinister adaptation of Monopoly; and the small state, with the wisdom with which small states are traditionally credited, determines to accept its responsibilities and so to lower diplomatic world temperature. Roger McDougall and Stanley Mann have produced an extraordinarily uneven script. But there are inventions here that Clair would appreciate and more wit, however thinly spread, than the film knows what to do with. Unhappily the producers have employed an American director, Jack Arnold, whose experience has been mainly in science fiction and who cannot respond readily to this brand of serious humour and slapstick. They have encouraged Peter Sellers to play three parts; and although his Grand Duchess has an exquisite Victorian melancholy and a remote, slightly wolfish charm, his hero is an unexpectedly lumpish and heavy buffoon. Almost fatally, they have let the tempo drag sadly during the New York invasion, so artlessly unreal that it should have been bundled through as quickly as possible rather than drawn out to undermine the whole fantasy. *The Mouse that Roared* is desperately inept and genuinely likable, a combination rare enough to stir affectionate sympathy.

One comes back, though, to the initial point: the need for audacity. Tati has it in his techniques, his uncompromising individuality, but there is still something inhibiting in his temperament. *The Mouse that Roared* is rather a bold little film, though it might have gone still further. On recent evidence, it seems possible that we may be in for a period of destructive comedy, disinterested cynicism, from British studios. It would be pleasant to feel that somewhere, sometime, we were going to see a comedy about Britain or Europe in the 1950's, a film tough enough and bold enough to look at the social scene here or abroad, or international politics, or the mood of Jimmy Porter's generation, without hedging its bets or cheating its audience. Comedy, and especially social comedy, is the art of accuracy and recklessness; and neither quality has ever gone with the longing to please.



"I'm All Right, Jack": climax to a television discussion.

We are the lambeth boys

RICHARD
HOGGART



DEAR KAREL:

IT MAY SEEM PRECIOUS to write this "review" of *We Are the Lambeth Boys* in the form of a letter to you, but I think I have sound reasons. I am not a film critic and could not write a review of the usual kind. Nor would I want to, in this instance. I want instead to look at some of the questions which the film is bound to raise for anyone interested in the way "ordinary life" is treated in popular art and entertainments nowadays.

First, a general observation about your "subjective" approach. It's an approach which is regarded uneasily today (in descriptive prose as much as in film) and avoided whenever possible. Look, for example, at the stream of well-meaning television documentaries on "The Colour Problem," or "The Problem of Youth" or "Human Relations in Industry," all desperately anxious to be comprehensive ("the whole picture"), objective ("unbiased") and balanced ("a fair cross-section")—and all disjointed and dead.

Even worse is that bastard form the "dramatised documentary" which still seeks comprehensiveness, objectivity and balance but—as if putting one toe into the deep waters of the imaginative life—uses a range of invented characters and some invented dialogue. But the characters are stereotypes ("a typical well-adjusted boy") and the dialogue merely makes flat, sensible points peppered with suitable colloquialisms ("None of them *try* to understand me... right, then, they'll cop it").

One cause of all this is obvious. Mass media with public-service responsibilities in a period of great social self-consciousness are acutely afraid of being accused of "bias" from any direction. But I think also that we may be more deeply afraid of the challenge of the imagination, and so cling to the comparative emotional calm of an approach that at least looks slightly scientific. Ironically, the fullest subjective approach on television today is made by the advertisements, and they have things both ways. Nobody worries about the *quality* of their subjectivity, only about the "literal" truth of their claims. And these worries the contractors can easily cope with, by setting up a succession of small committees to draft new little rules.

Whatever the reasons for the situation, the loss is obvious. These productions may be well-meaning but they are also drained of meaning. What is lost is the sense of life itself, the pattern of varying emotional pressures which is different from the pattern made by statistical comprehensiveness. If all the right things are *said* about the Colour Problem, Youth and Human Relations in Industry, we will all nod agreement. But nothing is likely to have happened at the level at which these issues are really felt. Our imaginative awareness won't have increased. For this, the author has to commit himself imaginatively.

All this is a fairly long but, I think, relevant preamble to *We Are the Lambeth Boys*. Your new film has no plot, no invented characters or dialogue and no imposed dramatic pattern. But it has one of the characteristics of art which distinguishes it from the documentaries I've mentioned. It does not seek to be objective, balanced or comprehensive. It says nothing about juvenile delinquency, home relationships, personal problems or private sex-life (though all these would affect the people in the film). It sets out to show, not the whole truth, but some aspects of the truth, wholly. It is imaginatively committed and seeks to communicate, in the area it explores, a felt emotional depth.

If I read it right, it is meant to embody your own sense of some of the most important qualities possessed by these young people at a London youth club—the strength and variety of their vitality, their lively, tolerant and complex sense of community. On these grounds I think the film succeeds remarkably. One doesn't easily forget the immensely

"We Are the Lambeth Boys". Photograph on the left by Frank Herrmann.

vital and expressive faces, the high-pitched explosive giggles and trills of the girls' talk, the bright lifting invitation of the trumpets as the groups walk down the street towards the club, the vivid ride through the West End, the shrewdness and confusion of the debates. The predominant impression is of extraordinary energy before life and of admirable qualities of character—loyalty, irony, gaiety, vigour. And all this is convincing, fresh and unimposed. At the very least it should help us to see beyond the clichés and easy judgments on teenagers; it should help, in your own phrase, to “redress the balance.”

In its general direction, this whole approach seems to me the right one (though I would prefer to call it a film-essay rather than documentary). I'm sure it has a long way still to go, though some items here were exceptionally suggestive. For instance, there was that lovely and moving dance when the camera roved over different couples and groups while the band beat out “Putting on the Style”—a song which nicely manages both to enjoy the vitality of young people and to comment ironically on it. Without discursive intrusions, this sequence put together three elements—the lyric, the tune, the dancing—each working at the same imaginative level, to make a whole complex effect.

For just this reason I was dissatisfied with the commentary, with the intention behind its form of words. I think this sort of essay will do better when it can either dispense with a commentary or find one which works within the same imaginative field as the camera; when it does not stab into the film's evocations, mediating, ordering, conceptualising and relating them to the world of rational assent; but when it lies obliquely to the scenes (as “Putting on the Style” does) and so creates a richer resonance.

Just a hint of this could be seen in the moving remark made as morning broke over the flats. More important was the scene in which the boys' gossip about gang warfare moved across the routine of their work at the Post Office. This was a brave attempt to solve what I have always thought a major problem in this kind of visual essay—to show the richness, the horror and the glory, of the inner life below the drab outer level. That this attempt didn't quite succeed for me may have been due partly to my poor ear for Cockney speech. I think, though, it was probably only a partial resolution of a very difficult formal problem.

The sequence of the club cricket match with Mill Hill had some good moments and avoided almost all the more obvious emotional pitfalls in such a situation. But one or two moments, there and elsewhere, did raise the whole question of the legitimacy of the limits you had decided to impose on this essay—it does not deal, you have said, with the “inner” life, with “the deeper dissatisfactions” (though incidentally this seems to conflict partially with the second of your announced aims: “to suggest some of the limitations which may continue to frustrate their full and free development”). The division between the inner and outer life is bound to be a convention, of course, established only by a very firm control of suggestion and implication. You remember when, near the end of the cricketing afternoon, the camera lingered on the faces of some Lambeth boys watching Mill Hill boys swim? Were those faces sad, slightly pathetic? What was going on behind each one? I could guess, but I wouldn't be sure if I'd guessed what really was there or what you had intended. We were out of the “group” life within which you had established your terms and your right to speak. I felt much the same when the truck rolled (and the film went quiet?) through the dingier streets of Lambeth at the end of that trip. If what was being said was what I thought, I doubted your place to say it, just there. And later a couple walked at the end of the evening down a dingy street—towards the uncharted personal dilemmas of life. That perspective opened up much more than you wanted to cope with, within this film . . . slightly, but disturbingly.

My own inclination would be towards asking this kind of

essay to become much more subjective and to encompass the inner life. For, even when we have praised its great virtues and understood your limited aim, there is something unsatisfactory about the experience presented in *We Are the Lambeth Boys*. You show very well indeed some of the great positive virtues in the group life of these young people. But the “public” life can't be separated from the personal life (or indeed virtues from vices) without a distortion. Your film is really a political or propagandist act (I don't mean that it has anything to do with the party system, of course). It uses some of the approaches of art but deliberately does not seek one of art's main qualities—disinterestedness (which is different from the objectivity, comprehensiveness and balance I talked about earlier). It uses some of the ways of the imagination to make a good point; but it is making a point. I think that if this sort of film-essay is to develop, it must accept the disciplines, the disinterested (not the “redressing”) disciplines of art. Its makers must be prepared to be judged neither by their “objectivity” nor by their prior commitment but by the quality of their imaginations, by the depth and honesty of their insights. Think of Tchekov's short stories, which are often superficially almost like documentary; it's that kind of commitment, that kind of disciplined art which is not at all a matter of aesthetic formalities, that ought to be sought.

If one doesn't aim at this, one is bound to abstract and distort, even if only slightly. One can't both follow the requirements of the imagination and yet seek to “redress a balance.” And the weakness here—indeed the most common weakness of Free Cinema—is that it tends towards idealisation. People will call *We Are the Lambeth Boys*, quite rightly, “an immensely sympathetic study.” But such a phrase distances and reduces. You don't use it of Tchekov's studies of young girls or old men.

So I think serious film-makers have to embrace much more firmly imaginative disciplines basically not different from those which serious writers try to embrace. Free Cinema is immensely tougher, more honest and sensitive, and more intelligent than commercial cinema, and we are all grateful for that. It has dispelled a lot of the suffocating fog of phoney sentiment and false observation. But it still has a vaguely “poetic” blur of sensitive commitment and social concern round its own edges. It will only stand out clear and sharp—committed and concerned in the right way—when it faces better the more demanding (and more exciting) problems of the imagination.

Yours,

RICHARD HOGGART.



Film Reviews

ASHES AND DIAMONDS

ANDRZEJ WAJDA IS A significant case. He represents an aspect, not just of the contemporary Polish cinema, but of our own time. We know from *A Generation* and *Kanal* that he is outstandingly talented. We know he is a humanist. The overwhelming thing about both films is not so much their tremendous actuality and honesty as their passionate, romantic belief in a young cause. The talent is more than ever in evidence in *Ashes and Diamonds* (Contemporary), the last part of Wajda's unplanned trilogy dedicated to his own generation of youth and its sacrifice in the last war. But there is an unmistakable shift in values, from generous idealism to bitter irony, from tragedy to catastrophe, that puts Wajda's humanism in a new light. His faith no longer strikes one as a search undertaken in hope, but as a lonely, losing struggle against misanthropy and disillusion. One thing above all seems to keep him going: a burning desire to express all that is young, mortal, sentient and suffering in an absolute orgy of self-identification. And up to a point this pays off.

To begin with, he has a gift for impact—the film begins with bullets fired at close range ploughing up flames on a man's back, and ends with the killer's own violent death agonies on a rubbish dump—and dramatic concentration. The entire action takes place within some twelve hours in a small town in the middle of Poland. Maciek, the hero, is the youngest member of a small underground resistance unit loyal to the *émigré* nationalist government in London. An hour after trying to kill a newly arrived Communist District Secretary at the expense of the lives of two innocent workers, he is standing in the market square listening to a loudspeaker announcement of the end of the war. His orders, however, stand. The assassination must still be carried out. In their adjoining hotel rooms, we quickly sum up the killer and his quarry, Szczuka. The latter, an old volunteer from the Spanish war, Moscow-trained and with a long career of underground activity behind him, is now a tired and broken man on the point of realising his revolutionary ideal. Maciek, the fearless resistance fighter with all human experience in his grasp but trained only to obey and kill, is suddenly a young man in love for the first time, questioning his cause, searching for a way out in order to live at peace and yet remain true to himself. But the issue is irrevocable. Maciek shoots Szczuka, the dead man falls into the wide embrace of his assassin, who is himself killed the following morning, trying to escape.

"By means of my modest film," Wajda is reported to have declared, "I want to show the spectator the complex and difficult world of this generation, to which I belong myself." An illuminating statement, if not one to be pressed too literally, since there is little psychological depth in any of the characterisations, while from the political point of view the story remains one of personal rather than doctrinal conflict: Maciek and Szczuka barely hint at their beliefs, let alone develop them. Nor are the several subplots any more informative: their complexity is one of narrative and intrigue rather than political. Szczuka, for instance, has a son, brought up since his wife's death by his sister-in-law, who is married to Maciek's superior. He visits their home, but his son isn't there. He has been picked up by the police as a member of a rival resistance group, and Szczuka is on his way to the prison to see him when he is killed by Maciek. The situation, for all its power and the heightening effect it has on the tragedy of the two main protagonists, seems too rigged and literary a device to be wholly convincing on its own terms. And it has encouraged some rather facile symbolism: a creaking cupboard door that won't shut, the boy staring listlessly at a moth caught in his interrogator's bright desk-light. One feels an equally vague dissatisfaction with the glimpse of the local bourgeoisie during the armistice banquet. These opportunist functionaries and venal journalists whooping

it up with outraged dignitaries and party time-servers before nodding off on a lavatory seat—one would the more willingly accept Wajda's bitterness if the vein of caricature were subtler.

This bitterness, disorientation and disillusion is nevertheless the essence of the film's meaning, and might well argue an extension to Wajda's grasp, a new maturity inherent in the replacement of *A Generation's* political affirmation and *Kanal's* spiritual exaltation by unerring realism: a realism attaining through the senseless, fratricidal struggle of Pole against Pole to the ordinary, rather than idealised, humanity released by the new order. This, at least, is Wajda's intention: not to report a debate, long since concluded, between two political doctrines; not just to give an authentic picture of an historical period. More than anything, his film is meant as a salute to a deceived generation, some condemned to physical, moral and political death in the Warsaw sewers, others—like Maciek—left totally unprepared to accept or understand the changes brought about by the Communist liberation.

So Wajda has set out, troubled but determined not only to reaffirm his humanist principles as an act of faith in today's Macieks, but also to set an example to their fellows—men with a foot in both camps like Drewnowski, the Mayor's secretary—who have since become cynical opportunists retreating into hedonism, nihilism and (in the case of several of Wajda's own colleagues) frightened expressionism. His task, and opportunity, are immense: to fuse all these elements, and the past and the present, into a unified dramatic whole ending with an eloquent contemporary symbol—Maciek's death upon a rubbish dump.

His partial success owes a great deal to his actors, and particularly Zbigniew Cybulski as Maciek. This extraordinary performance, with its banked interior fires giving way to sudden displays of hysteria and despair, its slightly maladroit and yet almost feminine charm, might seem at first too intellectual and modern a concept for a resistance fighter. But the anachronistic dark glasses ("a souvenir," Maciek explains, "of the sewers") and the narrow, zip-pocket jeans are a reminder that the young generation played a big part in the intellectual revolt, "the second betrayal," of 1956, and that wearing Western dress is one way in which students (Maciek's own self-description when signing the hotel register) expressed their views after the Communists forced them into political silence.

Wajda's fondness for the concentrated, double-import image achieves many such discreetly telling effects. While a pallid blonde bows to the applause of the banquet guests for her rendering of a maudlin patriotic song, Maciek and his fellow conspirator, Andrzej, remain alone in the dimly lit bar, recalling the names of their dead comrades as they set the vodka glasses alight, disguising their own feelings of self-pity and betrayal by an air of cynical indifference. Again, when Andrzej phones his superior from the hotel lobby to report their early failure, Wajda gathers his three main adversaries into a single deep-focus shot, with Maciek outside the kiosk watching Szczuka, smoking, at the reception desk. Wajda's power to build scenes like these to an extreme degree of tension is due as much to their unstrained credibility as to their almost sadistic intensity.

And yet, by contrast, it is an excessive reliance on the cruelty of coincidence which finally betrays him, in melodramatic devices such as Maciek's accidental witnessing of the girl's grief on learning that her lover has been murdered, his confrontation with the two corpses, and his own largely accidental death. It is apparently not enough for Maciek to be put by chance in the next room to Szczuka, nor to meet him at a crucial moment on the landing; both must now be engulfed by the same Gothic nightmare. Thus, following the extravagant shock image of the wooden Christ hanging upside down in the ruined church, and Maciek's stiff gesture of horror freezing over the two corpses in front of the altar, Wajda cuts straight to Szczuka's bedroom and the delayed, thriller effect of an apparently disembodied gramophone horn slowly entering the room—a symbol of the trump of doom.

These baroque excesses not only ruin the film's generally realistic purity of style (witness in particular the lovers' heads in their dark idyll, presented with absolute directness and simplicity), but—in their insistence on fate and doom—reduce Maciek's death from the level of real tragedy to that of catastrophe. By the same token, they reduce Wajda's faith in today's Macieks, since the hope implied in the film's title is no longer clearly communicated. What, then, went wrong? In attempting a double fugue has Wajda strained his technical resources? In fact, his resources are too abundant. Somehow, and desperately, he feels that he must establish himself and his art on a new level compatible with Poland's present mood and circumstances. And so he brings into his cinematic vocabulary all that he can find in the films now filling Poland's



"Ashes and Diamonds": Zbigniew Cybulski and Adam Pawlikowski.

cinemas—bits of Fellini (a white horse from *La Strada*), Benedek (Maciek's first encounter with the barmaid from *The Wild One*), Laurence Olivier's *Richard III*, Buñuel—together with hints of German expressionism: the hypnotised polonaise procession is led by a wild-eyed, white-haired maestro of sorts with an uncanny resemblance to Lang's Doctor Mabuse.

Yet, like Maciek, his doubts remain. His faith in the pure poetry of *A Generation* and in his chosen medium is too small. And that is why he violates it with the very opportunism he is attacking. The humanity of a film can only lie in its pure authority of expression, and never in external techniques or ideas alone. Zbigniew Cybulski, for all his startling effects, has such authority, and it is this performance—rather than all Wajda's fireworks—that gives Maciek's death the kind of quiet sorrow that belongs to history.

PETER JOHN DYER

THE FACE

THE OWNER OF "THE FACE" is a travelling hypnotist, a follower of Mesmer and the star-turn of "Vogler's Magnetic Health Theatre." He owns, in fact, two faces: a professional face—bearded, bewigged, eyes heavily ringed with black, a compelling and dignified mask—and the naked face beneath, anxious, insecure, touchingly vulnerable, which only his wife knows.

His company comprises a sly, loquacious impresario, a spell-binding old crone, the hypnotist's assistant and wife dressed as a boy, and a young man, the coach driver. The little band has fallen on evil times and is fleeing from legal prosecution for fraud and insidious magical practices. On their way through a bedevilled forest they come across a dying actor—an irresistible occasion for Bergman the scriptwriter to air explicitly some of Bergman the man's preoccupations with the fear and fascination of death. ("I'll lay bare the actual moment to you," says the actor, gazing into the hypnotist's face. "Now it's reached my hands, now my

feet, now I can't see...") Here, too, is the conviction that only through complete self-knowledge can one achieve spiritual release and happiness, even though the dark areas of experience may house that driving force of the artist which, exposed, might well wither away ("I've always longed for a knife... that would lay bare my entrails... a sharp blade to cleanse all impurities..."). The mid-nineteenth century scene assumes all the hallucinatory menace of Bergman's medieval time; and indeed to all intents and purposes the aim is timelessness: we are in the deep Bergman country and the time is the witching hour.

The actor, presumably dead, is bundled into the coach and the journey continues—to the town where the company is halted for an interrogation by a hostile group of officials: a Lord Lieutenant, the Chief of Police, and a sceptical doctor. A test demonstration of their mesmeric powers is fixed for the next day.

It is at this point in the film that one has time, in spite of the authority of the playing and the immaculate production, to wish for a tighter control of the script. As night draws on and the Bergman repertory company comes into its own above and below stairs, the house becomes crowded with incidental activity. The hypnotist is visited by the lieutenant's wife, who offers him sympathy and her bed ("I've given my husband a sleeping potion"); a frightened servant girl in the attic is crooned to sleep by the old sorceress; in the washing-shed another, more pert serving wench (Bibi Andersson) seduces the coach driver with calculated innocence; the actor, presumed dead, lurches through the door to die once more; and, over all, a violent thunder storm breaks. For all its surface brilliance one recalls, with occasional irreverence, *The Old Dark House*.

With the morning performance, however, the film resumes its main theme: the conflict of the artist, with his fundamental need of illusion and spiritual sleight-of-hand, and the factual man of science who scorns all that is not susceptible to cold analysis. After the performance, part farce, part genuine mystification, the doctor is still triumphant: authority is all on his side, and the goaded artist takes a macabre revenge in a nightmarish passage

of justifiable Grand Guignol. When the revenge is exposed as yet another display of brilliant trickery, the artist is stripped of all dignity: the mask fallen, he is reduced to pitiable life-size, a penniless servant grateful to pick up the coin scornfully flung down. All seems lost, cold fact and materialism have won the day, and the troupe prepare for their ignoble, risible departure under the driving rain. But at the last moment a summons arrives to a command performance before the King of Sweden. With a joyous swing of the pendulum the balance of power is switched: to sudden sunshine and a jubilant sound track, they drive away, invincibly resilient, with victory snatched from the very hands of defeat.

This account, long as it is, is the barest simplification of the film. Psychological red herrings riddle the piece, flung in with a seemingly wanton disregard for amplification and final significance. One knows that Bergman works at great speed, and a pure, potentially simple fusion of plot with content must be well-nigh impossible in such circumstances. But the scattering of unexpanded personal allusions is becoming a wanton habit: they become an unnecessary hindrance to the film's action and encourage a dangerous cart-before-the-horse attitude in the audience. The wood, one feels, has no need to be safeguarded by so many trees—particularly those of stunted growth.

Once again tribute must be paid to the meaningful precision of the actors. These are performances that show no sign of haste, and their now familiar attunement to the director's wishes is a method in itself. Max von Sydow as the hypnotist, superbly sensitive and composed as the performer, helpless and disintegrated as the man beneath; Naima Wifstrand, as the ancient, snickering crone; Gunnar Björnstrand, as the coldly sadistic champion of cold reason—all are first class. And Gunnar Fischer's photography is, as always, among the best in the world. *The Face* (Contemporary) is still a fascinating box of tricks, a superior piece of intellectual legerdemain given its own special unity by the director's very personal imagination. But if we are ever going to see more than this from Bergman, now, one feels, is the time.

DEREK PROUSE

NORTH BY NORTHWEST

CRITICS WHO LIKE to see Hitchcock's films as so many cryptograms to be puzzled over for hidden symbols are going to have a hard time with *North by Northwest* (M-G-M). This is the purest piece of entertainment film-making we have had from him in some years; it is also, which does not inevitably follow, the most purely entertaining. After the strains of wrongful arrest, or the elaborate identity-puzzle of *Vertigo*, there is something spacious and assured about this return to a world of gigantic spy rings ruled by silkily mannered art collectors, of secret plans (what secrets?—it never matters) taken out of the country by chartered aircraft, of trans-continental chases in express trains and bewildering midnight meetings in darkened airports.

The script, by Ernest Lehman, is apparently a screen original, itself a change in these days when Hollywood regards an adaptation from something or other as part of a film's pedigree. But Mr. Lehman, one feels, was working under orders. Almost twenty years ago, Hitchcock staged a final chase around the Statue of Liberty; this time, he has chosen a formidably grotesque national monument—Mount Rushmore, where the features of America's dead presidents have been hugely hacked out of a cliff-side. Longer ago still, in *The 39 Steps*, the spy chief, training his revolver on Hannay, was interrupted when his wife calmly called him to lunch; here, again, interrogation is interrupted by a summons to the dinner table. And so on. Hitchcock's ability to repeat himself has always been infinite.

The story itself is a sort of high-pressure *39 Steps*, with the hero, innocent, imperturbable and implausibly resourceful, pursued simultaneously by the police for murder and by the spies for execution. In this case he is an advertising man, played by Cary Grant without the vestige of a rough edge or a crudely spontaneous reaction, who is mistaken by the master spy (James Mason) for a secret service agent. Intervening, as one of those cool but cryptic blonde intriguers who have fascinated Hitchcock since *Ingrid*

Bergman first played the part in *Notorious*, is Eva Marie Saint. All that matters, though, in this type of story is how plausibly and rapidly the victim can be sent on the run and how much ground the chase can be made to cover. And here Hitchcock shows all his unmatched ingenuity in using public places—Grand Central Station, the United Nations Building—as backgrounds for the alien and sinister.

North by Northwest's most effective sequence, however, takes place in a setting wholly bare. Cary Grant has been dropped by bus at a remote prairie stop and stands, an incongruous fugitive from Madison Avenue, in a landscape of scrub, cornfields, the occasional car speeding down the straight, flat highway. He is expecting an encounter with an agent; he waits, and eventually another man appears. They confront each other across the width of the road; but the man, introduced with such elaborate solemnity, is only a farmer waiting for a bus. Casually, he points out a crop-dusting plane, operating where there are no crops growing. He boards the bus . . . and in seconds the aircraft is swooping on Cary Grant, pursuing him with a rattle of gun-fire, chasing him through the growing corn. In the contrast between the slow, silent build-up, the long shots of the prairie, the isolation of the waiting figure, and the sudden, definitive burst of violence, we are safely in the hands of the most authoritative of precision experts.

Not all of *North by Northwest* is as good as this. The film is ridiculously long (two and a quarter hours), and inevitably there are passages, mostly those involving the equivocal heroine, in which the action drags and no adequate substitute is offered. Motivation, here, scarcely counts: even the situation of the girl involved with, and herself spying on, the enemy agent is brushed aside. Hitchcock explored this one, up to a point, in *Notorious*; here he merely states it. An advantage of these paper thin characters, though, is that they can be used for humour which would be redundant if the film even pretended to take its adventures at more than their face value. The advertising man, for instance, takes his mother, acidly argumentative and missing her bridge party, along with him on a detective expedition. A car chase, beginning with careful tension, ends in a ludicrous three car bumper-to-bumper pile-up.

Hitchcock's early chase films had a zest he has never been able, or perhaps wanted, to recover. But the immense calculation that has gone into this film, the cheap joke so carefully timed, the suspense



"The Face": von Sydow, Björnstrand and Ingrid Thulin.

effect so gloatingly delayed, is the mark of the ultimate in professionalism. And there is something to be said for a film that never puts a foot wrong without making one feel that even the false step is a deliberate one.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

MIDDLE OF THE NIGHT

YOU CAN'T BEAT THE SYSTEM. This is not what Paddy Chayefsky set out to say in *Middle of the Night* (Columbia) but it is one of the more emphatic statements that the picture makes. You can't beat the star system. Chayefsky wrote a television play about people in his world, a Jewish world. He made a stage adaptation and it had a long run on Broadway. Now the play is a piece of million-dollar cinema, excitingly shot in the streets of Manhattan, unquestionably at home in its third medium. But the film's stars, Fredric March and Kim Novak, are not entirely at home. Without them or their counterparts there might well not have been a picture. It's the system, and Chayefsky has tried to beat it before. *The Goddess's* receipts told their own story. So if you can't lick 'em, join 'em: it may not be the better part of valour, but here he has signed on the dotted line.

But, of first importance, what is Chayefsky trying to say? Has that changed? If not, is it worth saying again? Knock on any door, he says, and you will find the same loneliness, the same hunger, the same frustration. *People need each other*. His indictment is, simply, that we will not reach out our hand. To make this one small anguished gesture: that is triumph worth celebrating, that is heroism enough.

All the same, with Chayefsky, we must look a bit harder. For he is a writer so personal in idiom that with every new script he puts on view again not only what he wishes to say but how he sets about saying it. The groping, inarticulate talk, the fumbling inside the habits of a speech not made for revelation: this is his chosen country. Moments of self-exposure are provided by monologues, with little more than instigatory help from others in the scene. His characters, more isolated by speech than ever, take on some of the elements of trance, look deep, and show their naked selves. Here of course he is arbitrary; this is the mechanism he has arrived at. By now we can anticipate it, and to whatever degree we do so its effects may be flattened. It is an uneasy rhetoric. But this is still not enough of a flaw for us to discount what he has to say.

Solidly within the pattern comes the story of *Middle of the Night*. Jerry Kingsley, fifty-six years old and a widower, is a man made robust by success in the garment trade. His married daughter (Joan Copeland) is solicitous, modern: she inquires about his sex life. His sister musters for his inspection the latest in a series of suitably middle-aged partners for his declining years. Small wonder, then, at Jerry's reactions when he comes across his highly-strung receptionist and finds out that her trouble, following the break-up of her marriage, is emotional and sexual deprivation. Jerry plunges anxiously into love, full of self-doubt, afraid of being thought stupid or contemptible. She's only half his age. Is it lust, only that; the last gasp? And then, can he satisfy her, will he be incessantly fighting jealousy? Constantly on the verge of rupture, their love affair progresses. No matter the opposition they each find at home, the relentless family barrage, the conniving and the scorn, the touching fact comes home to them: they need each other.

Jerry's partner is Lockman (Albert Dekker), already far gone into desperate salacity. Lockman's dreams, bought at a price, are retailed each day at the shop. His lust is a matter for wonder from his cronies, disgust from his wife and son. But the dreams are hollow and false, the desire is the last vain trump. The parallel is possibly over-facile, but in the end it works. Lockman's attempted suicide jolts Jerry free from the self-pity that threatened to strangle his own love.

Chayefsky's essays in communicating the dilemma of age might almost seem a crusade. Marty's mother and her widowed sister come to mind; there is the bachelor uncle in *Wedding Breakfast*; the problem recurs in the TV plays *Printer's Measure* and *The Big Deal*. *The Mother*, particularly, seems in this respect to prepare the ground for the present story, for there you have not only the same Seventh Avenue world, but also, matching Lillian's glib "two-bit" psychology, the interfering failure of the daughter to understand the passion that moves her mother.

It is Fredric March's performance as Jerry Kingsley that gives *Middle of the Night* its major impact, despite the awkward feeling that he is not a member of his own family (who do, without ques-



"Middle of the Night".

tion, inhabit Chayefsky's world). When we first see March, with his pall-bearer friends, he's making a good stab at Jerry's inflections and gestures, but the scene is brief. "At home" to March is not Jewish Seventh Avenue, the ghetto of union shop and pirated models and "I can get it for you wholesale." He's at once a more emphatic and expansive, one might say Mid-western, actor (compare his first scene gestures, the hands out, rising, with the spreading and downward pumping gestures more natural to him elsewhere in the film). But March does experience Jerry's emotions and reveal them to us with beautiful compass. Kim Novak is only intermittently successful. The small but willing devices at her command are always employed with understanding, sometimes with brilliance, by Delbert Mann. But, finally, tact must lie in the performer, and Miss Novak doesn't yet have the actor's self-awareness that would allow her either the freedom or the restraints of such a discipline. It is a mark against the film—and against the system—to look beyond the two principals to the other members of the company, and particularly Glenda Farrell, Martin Balsam, Lee Grant and Edith Meiser. For then you sense readily enough, in their complete familiarity with their author's idiom, what revelations are possible in his recurring exploration of the tiny, absorbing society he knows best.

ROD McMANIGAL

LES COUSINS

BY THE CHANCES OF distribution, English audiences are likely to see Claude Chabrol's *Les Cousins* (Films de France) before his first film, *Le Beau Serge*. This is a double misfortune, not only because the two films are to some extent complementary, but because the second falls some way short of the qualities contained in the first. Both films have the same leading players: Gérard Blain and Jean-Claude Brialy, two young actors discovered through the short films of François Truffaut and Jean-Luc Godard, Chabrol's colleagues on *Cahiers du Cinéma*. Gérard Blain (who played Serge) is here a young man from the provinces, Charles, who comes to Paris to study law at the Sorbonne and to lodge with his cousin Paul, a law student less attached to his work than to the organisation of wild parties. Charles stands for innocence, conscience, hard work; Paul represents corruption, cynicism, easy living. In

their exam Charles the worker fails while Paul the cynic passes, at the cost (it is tentatively and improbably suggested) of bribing the examiner. Charles' disillusionment is a double one, since Paul also steals his girl friend Florence (Juliet Mayniel). And, as the final link in a diabolical chain of circumstances, Paul kills his cousin with a shot from a revolver which he believed to be unloaded.

The assumptions behind this film are sometimes arbitrary, but *Les Cousins* is chiefly of interest for the light it throws on the moral attitudes taken by its writers, the director and his co-scriptwriter, the novelist Paul Gégau. *Le Beau Serge* had already pointed the way: in this story of the reclamation of a lost soul, of the alcoholic Serge, apparently rescued from corruption by the intervention of his childhood friend François, the surface truth diverged from a deeper truth. François, the well-meaning, well-spoken Parisian, was in reality a hundred times less deserving than his friend, the lost soul in a country village and the drama's true hero. At the end of his first film, Chabrol presented us with a symbolic road to Calvary, as François dragged the drunken Serge through the snow and sleet to the bed where his wife was giving birth; and one could accept or reject this symbolism.

In *Les Cousins* the Christian references, while less obvious, are no less significantly worked out in the characters. Chabrol is known in France for his studies of Hitchcock's work, particularly his idea of the exchange, almost the "reversibility", of moral guilt (*I Confess*, *Strangers on a Train*). Here Chabrol himself carries still further this trick of a shift between the characters. At first sight it seems clear that Paul, the rake and the immoralist, is unlovable, while the hard-working, well-meaning Charles makes exclusive claims to our sympathy. But Chabrol is also concerned with deciphering the smallest gestures in moral terms, with revealing that we are all of us, in the last analysis, capable of any action—in short, with coming to grips with some eminently Catholic theories of free will. If it is finally Paul, for instance, who shoots Charles at their game of Russian roulette (with one bullet in the revolver), we mustn't forget that the embittered Charles had himself previously pointed the gun at the head of the sleeping Paul. In intention, in other words, Charles had already killed Paul; and in fact he is killed himself in the course of a game.

This twisted and slightly diabolic dialectic—very much Chabrol's own—demands consideration because it helps to clarify the director's attitude to his people. Chabrol sacrifices realism, the chance to situate his characters more firmly in time and place, in order to arrive at a "pure" relationship between them. His own private preference, one feels, is for Paul, just as in *Le Beau Serge* the real hero was not François, with his clumsy good intentions, but Serge himself. Chabrol, in fact, is much concerned with a particular Catholic theme: the part played by masochism in determining choice. This makes for an attitude coherent in itself and demanding respect, however much it may jar on people unable to adjust themselves to such an angle of vision. Certainly the film can be

seen simply as a brilliant stylistic exercise, considerably under the influence of the American cinema. And I am not sure that the director himself is fully aware of all the implications contained in his subject. His film is none the less clearly a revelation of the sort of preoccupations affecting the young French directors, their concern with things of the spirit and their near-nihilism. The essential thing about these young film-makers is that they are working with an independence which previously seemed the novelist's prerogative: one may criticise their message, but not the intensity of its expression.

LOUIS MARCORELLES

THE NUN'S STORY

ON PAPER, the ingredients of *The Nun's Story* (Warners), the latest film of Fred Zinnemann, seem to make up a rich and infallible recipe for commercial success. Audrey Hepburn, in a part which allows her to be seen in every light, from the pathetic to the heroic to the tragic to the ironic, plays a Belgian girl who enters a convent to become a nursing sister. She suffers a variety of spiritual torments and setbacks; she reaches Africa where, forbidden by her vows to respond to the handsome doctor (Peter Finch) for whom she works, she submerges herself in nursing only to be sent home with a delicate patient; and when at last she realises that her nature will never totally accept the burden of humility and self-denial placed upon a nun, she leaves the convent and re-enters the world outside.

The story is a true one, taken from a recent best-seller, but one feels that the film which Zinnemann envisaged when he first read the book has eluded him. Although Audrey Hepburn manages with dignity and a great sense of reality to convey some of the internal struggle of Sister Luke, she is unable to contain in her performance more than a fraction of what the part implies, since both direction and script (by Robert Anderson) fail to dramatise this struggle. We are meant to understand that a battle is raging in the nun's soul, yet there are no scenes, no relationships, no incidents through which the conflict could be shown. The battery of distinguished actresses (Peggy Ashcroft, Mildred Dunnock, Patricia Collinge, Rosalie Crutchley) engaged to play nuns is wasted; they are given nothing to act, except for a series of monologues which might have been stolen straight from a book of convent rules. Only the parting between Dame Edith Evans, as the Mother Superior, and Miss Hepburn, when two people and not two mouth-pieces confront each other, achieves some life. It is left to Peter Finch, in a short study of warm-hearted agnosticism, to bring a shock of genuine drama into the film.

Zinnemann seems to have been inhibited by an understandable reluctance to take up an attitude towards his subject, as if he were always conscious of the pressure of Catholic opinion and the Catholic market. The result is a series of compromises in which he makes no distinction between the agony of bending the will to the most extreme religious and spiritual demands and the discomfort of subjection to any rigid discipline. Too often Miss Hepburn and her fellow novitiates might just as well be new girls breaking the lights-out rule at a rather strict boarding school; and in the moments calling for the most intense feeling, the script, for the most part articulate to the point of dryness, becomes tongue-tied, and we are deafened by one of the most hideous scores ever devised.

The Nun's Story is a film which has swallowed its director whole. He has been drawn so close to his story that he has lost all perspective on it, and it is significant that the camera-work is dominated by huge close-ups. The narrative line is jerky, episodic, sometimes even confusing, although on the credit side it must be said that the documentary insights into the everyday life of a nun are fascinating—or horrifying, according to one's taste. The violent interludes—Sister Luke's fight with a lunatic, the battering of a nun to death by a Negro—are sickeningly well done, and the photography always effectively polished. But from a distinguished director this is a stumbling, stuttering piece of work.

KENNETH CAVANDER



Peggy Ashcroft and Audrey Hepburn in "The Nun's Story".

LE AMICHE

BORN IN 1912, Michelangelo Antonioni has made five feature films, and a reputation as one of the outstanding Italian directors of the last ten years. But *Le Amiche* (The Girl Friends; Gala), made in 1955, is his only film to date to have obtained a commercial release in Great Britain. Strikingly though it represents his talent, it is probably not his best work: most people prefer either *Cronaca di un Amore* (1950) or *Il Grido* (1957). Unlike these, *Le Amiche* is an adaptation, being based on a short novel by Cesare Pavese, *Tra Donne Sole*, which appears in his book *La Bell' Estate*. It must be stated immediately that the script itself is a betrayal of Pavese. One detects the fine Italian hand of Suso Cecchi d'Amico (she was the principal scriptwriter), smoothing out the rough spots in the Pavese tale, trying to make the story logical, unified and dramatic. But in giving it "form" she has reduced Pavese's bleakly "undramatic" study of soul-destroying despair to a well-turned, slightly sentimental and unavoidably novelettish affair. Pavese's original tale might well have borne the same epigraph as Gertrude Stein's *Three Lives* (a book which he much admired): *Donc je suis un malheureux, et ce n'est ni ma faute ni celle de la vie.*

Like the film, *Tra Donne Sole* tells the story of Clelia (Eleonora Rossi-Drago), a self-made woman who has come back to her native Turin to open a dress shop, and the members of Turin's smart society with whom she becomes involved: the young and desperate Rosetta and the self-indulgent, destructive Momina. Like the film, *Tra Donne Sole* begins with an attempted suicide and finishes with a successful one, but it is significant that in the novel we are never sure why Rosetta wanted to kill herself. Was it because she had never got over her liaison with Momina, or was it because she found, as did Pavese himself, the "business of living" to be ultimately unsatisfactory? In the film she commits suicide chiefly because she is forsaken by her artist lover (Gabriele Ferzetti), who is too weak to choose between her and his faithful and long-suffering wife (Valentina Cortese). The character of Clelia, too, has been sentimentalised, and her rather diversified sex life has been heavily toned down.

So the script is a betrayal of Pavese, and not very distinguished on its own terms. Gavin Lambert wrote of *Cronaca di un Amore* that there was "not enough analysis or strength in the writing to justify Antonioni's severe, dispassionate treatment." One could criticise *Le Amiche* on the same grounds. But it seems to me that this most sober and unoperatic of Italian films is paradoxically like an opera, in that its formal and plastic qualities and the penetration of its style transcend the script in just the same way that Mozart's or Verdi's music transcend the libretti of *Così fan Tutte* or *La Traviata*. Antonioni's realistic technique and his extraordinary way of getting inside his characters and their milieu, of withholding direct comment, help him to re-create the atmosphere and spirit of Pavese's story. He has found his way to his own extension of neo-realistic technique through concentrating not on social reality but on inner reality. It is more important, he has declared, to show what is in the heart and mind of the man whose bicycle has been stolen than simply to portray him, so to speak, in terms of the stolen bicycle.

Antonioni uses neither transparencies nor studio exteriors; the characters are seen evolving in their actual milieu. He never cross-cuts; he follows his characters. The camera wanders among and around them, tracking them remorselessly until they reveal their essence by a word, a gesture, a silence. The style is objective and cold, yet compassionate. Antonioni is not only satirising the high society milieu of Turin: if there is satire, it is of the human condition itself. The scene at the beach, for instance, although superficially resembling that of *I Vitelloni*, is different in that one never feels in *Le Amiche* that the problems of the characters could be solved by having to work for a living. The boredom of *le amiche* is a more profound, an almost metaphysical boredom. Antonioni, one suspects, is trying to say that when the material problems of life are solved, man is left only with his own boredom and the meaninglessness of his existence. So, even though the script tells us that Rosetta committed suicide because she was thrown over by Lorenzo, the film tells us that suicide can have other and more profound reasons. Ultimately, it is perhaps the beautifully cold, silver-grey light of Turin and the cool and spare music of Giovanni Fusco that convey the calm despair and resignation of Pavese. Reminiscent of Bresson's *Les Dames du Bois de Boulogne*, the stylisation of the décor acts as the Greek columns against which the drama

is played out. And the acting is almost without exception superb. Best of all is England's own Yvonne Furneaux. As the bored, heartless Momina she beautifully indicates the hopelessness and futility which can hide behind the sophisticated exterior. She is really as desperate as Rosetta, but, like the rest of us, she knows the rules of the game.

RICHARD ROUD

ANATOMY OF A MURDER

ANATOMY OF A MURDER (Columbia), Otto Preminger's latest film, and the official American entry at this year's Venice Film Festival, arrives in this country unscarred throughout its 160 minutes, in spite of a brisk passage of arms with the Chicago censors.

It has, however, been awarded an "X" certificate here on the merits of the clinical candour, aptly suggested by the title, of some of the court scenes. The film concerns as squalid a case of rape and murder as ever disrupted the tranquility of a Michigan town. Lt. Manion, of the U.S. Army, has shot a local bar proprietor who raped his wife, and the soldier's trial turns on two main questions. Is Laura Manion telling the truth when she says she was raped? And was Lt. Manion in the grip of an "irresistible impulse" when he shot her attacker? It is this case that Attorney Biegler, down on his luck after losing the office of Public Prosecutor, is hustled into defending by his boozing old lawyer friend—and by a stack of unpaid bills.

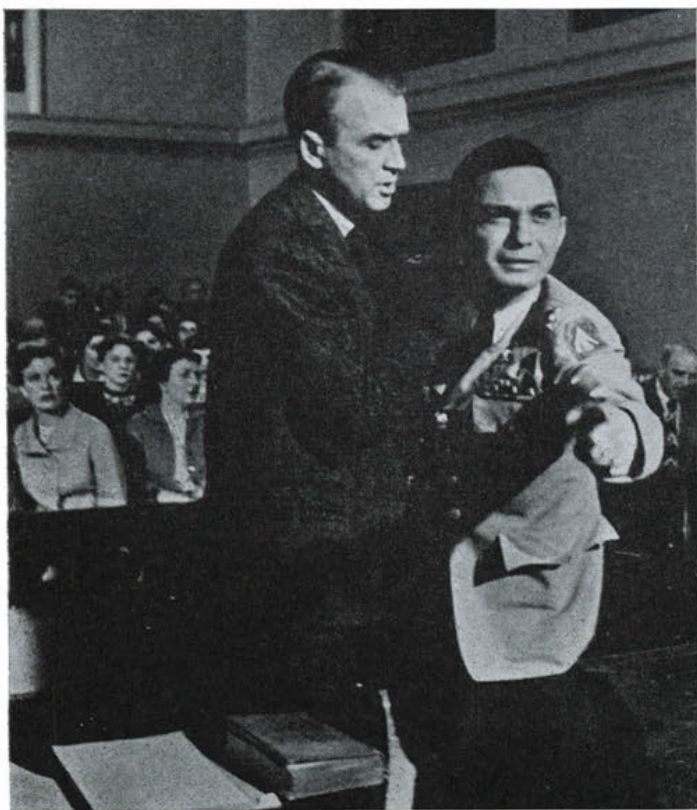
In this kind of film the Attorney has to obey certain rules. He must be homely and slightly vague, so that his true quick-wittedness in court can be all the more dramatic; he must be given to eccentric hobbies, like playing jazz in a local roadhouse or fishing obsessively, so that he can press artificial flies in lawbooks during the trial and captivate the judge with fishing stories; he must have a drunken side-kick who can provide a vital piece of evidence at great risk to his life; he must be pitted against a slick city lawyer so that his essential honesty can shine through. To all these story-telling imperatives Otto Preminger has responded by casting James Stewart. As a result much of this film has an air of *déjà vu*. We have seen this Attorney and his witty, unpaid secretary (Eve Arden) a hundred times before. It is all supremely well done, but a little old-fashioned.

If there were nothing more to this film Preminger would still have made a highly proficient, sure-fire courtroom drama with great star value. But he has broadened the scope of his picture. He has introduced equivocation.

None of the issues is allowed to be conveniently clear cut for a lazy audience. As the trial progresses detail is built up to particularise Manion and his wife far beyond the usual cinema conception of personality. In fact, all the characters, their motives, even the



"Le Amiche": Eleonora Rossi-Drago, Valentina Cortese, Yvonne Furneaux.



"Anatomy of a Murder": James Stewart and Ben Gazzara.

methods of the police, are ambivalent. People are shown, with unsentimental honesty, to be inscrutable, complex and contradictory; at the end a sly twist of the story leaves even the verdict of the jury in the film in doubt, and so Preminger insists that the audience itself shall become jury.

The James Stewart part, balanced against the rest of the film, now serves a dramatic purpose. As the man who is "too pure for the impurities of the law," he provides the one secure anchor for our sympathies; he at least cannot be accused of double motives. The other actors dovetail neatly into the tangled scheme of things. Ben Gazzara plays Lt. Manion with his guarded, feline intelligence, double-edged in every look, while Lee Remick, as his wife, combines a desperately calm sensuousness with bewilderment liable at any moment to turn into hysteria. The film is full of small, cleverly integrated performances. But the most extraordinary of them all comes from a "natural" (Judge Joseph C. Welch of Boston) who, with his lugubrious child's face and plaintively precise voice, makes away with a large part of the court scenes.

Directed as smoothly and accurately as this, the film almost rebounds on itself. The prevailing ambivalence spreads to the motives of its makers. Was Preminger trying to look freshly, with truly detailed observation, at the workings of justice, in which twelve human beings pass judgment on another human being—"as different from them as they are from each other"—and have to be unanimous? Or was he merely using a facade of irony and medical detachment to cash in on a sensational subject? The film's chief weakness is that it does not acquit itself of double-dealing. But it is worth giving it a trial.

KENNETH CAVANDER

In Brief

ROBERT HAMER'S LATEST FILM *THE SCAPEGOAT* (M-G-M) was, it appears, considerably doctored by its American distributors before it reached the screen. Every so often the voice of the principal player, Alec Guinness, takes up a needless commentary, while the characters on the screen mouth mysteriously. There have been cuts, too—unless the dramatic continuity was originally worse than one might expect from Hamer and Gore Vidal (who adapted Daphne du

Maurier's original novel). Finally, the whole film has been thickly varnished over with a loud and unrelenting score by the Hollywood composer Bronislau Kaper.

Having acknowledged this much, one must still question whether *The Scapegoat* could ever have been much better than it now is. The story is promising. An English university lecturer on holiday is tricked into assuming the identity of his double, an impoverished French count and rascal. After his initial bewilderment, he decides to accept the responsibility of a failing estate, an unhappy wife and young daughter, an autocratic, drug-ridden mother, a malicious and embittered sister and a beautiful mistress. He is just beginning to sort out and even enjoy the problems of his adopted life when the real Count reappears, murders his wife in order to inherit her money, and dismisses the scapegoat. When the scapegoat refuses to go, the two shoot it out. The Englishman wins, and returns to the arms of their mistress.

It all has the superficial fascination and potentialities of, say, *Così è (si vi pare)* or *Enrico IV*. But it is no more than superficial. Miss du Maurier is no Pirandello; she cannot carry the affair beyond the surface insignificance of a mystery romance. Hamer, the stylist, might have concealed the basic deficiencies if he could have imposed real style upon the piece. One senses a tentative groping in the flattening of the acting, the deliberate playing down of the fantastic and extravagant into the tones of the breakfast table; but real stylishness has eluded him. And with style, mood. The tone of the film is never resolved or maintained for two sequences together. If it had been, it might have been easier to accept the disdain of dramatic structure or the cavalier inconsequence of the pay-off.

The actors may very well have been puzzled by it all; and one feels that Hamer has done little to enlighten them. Guinness gives one of his most non-committal interpretations, dutifully differentiating the twin roles, but offering little more in illumination of the characters. Pamela Brown (the sister) and Bette Davis (the mother) act vigorously, covering up the vagueness of the characters with a great deal of hissing and hamming. In the circumstances Irene Worth's refined, sensitive and often moving playing as the wife is all the more striking.—DAVID ROBINSON

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THE DEVIL'S DISCIPLE (United Artists). Shaw himself once said that the necessity for a scenario writer depended on how much the author had left undone: provided he was a playwright, the author should do everything except the shooting script. With Shaw, at any rate, the film adaptors are at last having things their own way. Already since his death we have had a sentimentalised version of *The Doctor's Dilemma*, and now comes *The Devil's Disciple*, rewritten to display Burt Lancaster's athletic prowess.

There was undoubtedly scope for intelligent adaptation of what its author admitted to be a basically "threadbare popular melodrama." In fact he had himself written additional scenes and dialogue for a scenario which was prepared for Gabriel Pascal. But the changes made by John Dighton and Roland Kibbee in their present screenplay weaken the none too robust structure of the original while at the same time blurring and distorting the ideas which were its strength. Shaw's first act has been virtually discarded, reducing Mrs. Dudgeon to a mere cypher and omitting all reference to the repressive home life that has made a rebel of her son. Essie, the tattered love-child, has become a trim housemaid, Timothy Dudgeon is hanged instead of dying in his bed, and the climax of Dick's trial is delayed by an absurd sequence in which Pastor Anderson (Lancaster) discovers his potentiality as a man of violence and hurls blazing logs at the British troops. The effect of all this is to obscure Dick's motives and reduce his stature. The archetypal Shavian hero is in danger of becoming a mere buffoon, and Kirk Douglas lacks the authority to redress the balance in Dick's favour.

There is another major structural change, and one of at least partial virtue, in that General Burgoyne, whose belated but dominating appearance in the third act upsets the balance of the play, now appears within the first ten minutes and, in the person of Laurence Olivier, sets the pace for the rest of the way. This is a performance of consummate skill. Every syllable is placed with the delicacy and precision of a champion tennis player at the top of his form. One watches with happy anticipation, knowing that each shot is bound to clip the chalk for a certain winner. Not only does he get every value out of some of Shaw's best lines, he achieves the greater feat of giving a synthetic Shavian sparkle to the additional dialogue, in the process administering such a drubbing to his American co-stars that Burgoyne's military defeats are triumphantly avenged.

The overall surface shows little sign of having changed directors in mid-stream (Guy Hamilton replaced Alexander Mackendrick

but the film does suffer from a lack of tension and control, and there is an irritating continuity device involving the use of puppets. With all its faults, however, it will remain something of a collector's piece for its classic portrayal of Olivier's (and Shaw's) General Burgoyne.—BRENDA DAVIES

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THE RABBIT TRAP (United Artists). Philip Leacock's first Hollywood film seems a conscious attempt to repeat the success of *Marty*. (Although the credits call it a Canon Production, it began life as a Hecht-Hill-Lancaster film.) It was presumably felt to be Leacock's kind of subject because of the importance of a young boy to the story; but in fact *The Rabbit Trap* is basically composed of sturdier material than anything he has tackled in recent years. J. P. Miller's thoughtful script concerns an ambitious draughtsman (Ernest Borgnine) whose dependability has become abused by his employer. Enjoying one of his rare holidays with his wife and young son, he is recalled to the office to help with some urgent work. In the flurry of returning he forgets to dismantle a trap which he and the boy set to capture a wild rabbit. Only after they are back home does the boy realise that the rabbit will be left to starve. His father knows that it will be impossible to get time off to return to the trap, and that to insist will cost him at least his promotion and possibly his job.

It is some while before this basic conflict is sufficiently defined, but by the end of the film the situation has been firmly exposed and its solution declared with more conviction than earlier seems possible. Regrettably Miller's dialogue lacks the realism necessary to match his theme, and many scenes, particularly those between the husband and wife, are conducted in an idealised kind of talk which makes the establishment of true relationships impossible. The employer, too, is insufficiently individualised. Indeed, types have generally been allowed to substitute for characters, and a pointless sub-plot concerning the employer and a secretary seriously interrupts the film. The cast are unimpressive, and only the boy, who is effectively deadpan, seems to have been firmly directed.

The direction, in fact, seems mainly responsible for making *The Rabbit Trap* a lesser film than it might have been. Scene after scene is flatly handled, with little apparent attempt to shape or stress the script's sharpest moments. It is to Miller's credit that, despite the weaknesses of treatment and performance, the final impression is one of warmth and integrity—almost, indeed, of nobility.

DEREK HILL

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BILLY WILDER'S **SOME LIKE IT HOT** (United Artists) will not appeal to those who find female impersonation unamusing in any circumstances; and certainly, since it also contains two painfully accurate re-creations of gangland slaughter, its opportunities for offence are considerable. In fact the gangster sequences are the least successful part of the film. There is too much random detail and intramural humour (a marmoreal George Raft is confronted with a coin-flipping gunman played by Edward G. Robinson, Jr.) and the whole could be cut by at least one blood-bath. The horrifying Al Capone reunion dinner, for instance, is effectively staged and chillingly well-acted by Nehemiah Persoff, but it is an unrelated *tour de force*; its sole purpose, to conclude the "drag" act necessitated in the first place by an involuntary witnessing of the St. Valentine's Day massacre, could have been more simply served.

Although the comedy never quite shakes off this basic confusion in styles, it comes to life from the start. A suddenly speeding hearse sets the pace, a leaking coffin of whisky the pre-credits setting—Chicago in the freewheeling 'twenties—and a funeral parlour front to a speakeasy the comedy's predominant note of incongruity and masquerade. Soon, painted and padded and tilting at a perilous angle, two jazz musicians on the run join an all-girl train call for Florida. Extravagance takes over on arrival, when Jack Lemmon's husky squeaks and girlish dormitory confidences give way to frolicking chaperonage and beach games. Courted by a dotty, much-married millionaire (Joe E. Brown), the duenna mellows into a teasing siren, tangoing through the night with a rose gripped wistfully between her teeth. This is a brilliantly worked out performance. If Tony Curtis's cooing Josephine is by contrast a shade too real for comfort, the actor's heavier style of burlesque is better suited to a secondary impersonation, in yachting cap and blazer, of a pseudo-Cary Grant petroleum tycoon. Marilyn Monroe is charmingly herself, if a little wan, but her role of innocent at large is too peripheral to strike a useful balance with the film's blacker and more clinical humours.



"Some Like It Hot": Marilyn Monroe, Jack Lemmon, Tony Curtis.

Almost every character has a touch of consulting room fantasy. (Like *Love in the Afternoon*, the Wilder-I. A. L. Diamond script is distantly adapted from an old German film.) Apart from female impersonation, Tony Curtis takes a foam bath fully dressed and seduces a solicitous Marilyn by feigning doubts about his potency; Marilyn herself has a weakness for men in glasses—large pebble ones at that; George Raft makes a fetish of his immaculate spats; Joe E. Brown, having unerringly picked out the most heavily muscled girl in sight, is not in the least surprised to learn that he has eloped with a man. "After all," he says, "nobody's perfect." Obviously the day is that much nearer when Billy Wilder must film Hirschfeld's *Anomalies and Perversions* as a musical. So long as it casts Jack Lemmon as an Oedipus complex, there should be no grounds for complaint.—PETER JOHN DYER

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ASK ANY GIRL (M-G-M), a pugnacious little comedy about the trials of a secretary in Manhattan, wears the mild leer that currently seems a favourite Hollywood expression. Its jokes are strictly limited, with a reliance on the *double entendre* calculated to slide easily past the censor; its general appearance is rather haphazard and makeshift, as though the director, Charles Walters, and screenwriter, George Wells, had embarked on the production without much thought about just where it was leading them. Its heroine is pursued around her office by her first employer, a sweater manufacturer, then herself settles down in pursuit of the advertising agent for whom she goes to work. Instead, having enlisted the strategies of Madison Avenue in her campaign, she falls in love with her collaborator (David Niven). But the film's main—and on the whole sufficient—justification is the presence of its star, Shirley MacLaine. Since Hitchcock's *The Trouble with Harry*, Miss MacLaine has been stealthily advancing on the position lately abandoned by Judy Holliday, as Hollywood's most calmly ingenuous comedy actress. Lacking Judy Holliday's wistful enjoyment of her own naiveté, she substitutes a combination of exaggerated innocence with almost ferociously exact timing. Her



Shirley MacLaine and Jim Backus in "Ask Any Girl".

drunk scene, obligatory in this sort of comedy, is played on a note of outraged, wholly confident sobriety; her first encounter with the advertising business, as a non-smoker testing a flavoured cigarette, her adventures with a room-mate who locks her out of her flat or drives her to sleep in the bath, are similarly geared to an obstinate refusal to believe that she can really have involved herself in any situation so patently absurd. This flat, matter of fact surface, which can crack into wild hilarity, is Shirley MacLaine's comedy style; and the flimsily skittish *Ask Any Girl* at least gives her a chance to develop it.—PENELOPE HOUSTON.

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WITH A FEW EXCEPTIONS—mainly thrillers, and Westerns like Andre de Toth's *Day of the Outlaw*—the modestly budgeted, unassumingly intentioned, black and white American feature seems to have less individuality than at any time since the days of Val Lewton. Of recent thrillers, *STAKEOUT ON DOPE STREET* is by far the most interesting. Shot two years ago in and around Los Angeles, sold to Warner Brothers for distribution, it is the first film of a TV actor-writer-producer, Andrew J. Fenady, and director, Irvin Kershner. The routine story of the tracking down of some dope pedlars is mainly concerned with three young interlopers who find a discarded brief-case containing heroin and decide to hang on to it. The melodrama at the end (beatings-up, factory plant chase, death dive) and the monotonous *Dragnet* format, presumably chosen for its cheapness, are the least successful elements of what is in fact a boldly experimental little film. Shunning artifice, insistent violence and the vulgarity of (say) Zugsmith's "beat generation" productions, it has a genuine sense of involvement in the frustrations and futile dreams of its three disarmingly incoherent heroes. Their drab background comes alive with a subtle, vibrating force, and the scenes of their meetings in the back-room of a grocery store—for all the occasional tedium of improvised dialogue—have something vivid and tactile about them. Kershner's direction, though at times fumblingly derivative (those Wellesian entrances and exits) and at others downright banal, is altogether un-glossy and expressive: the highlight is a judiciously sensational flashback to a drug addict's "cold turkey" withdrawal in a police hospital, and its complete assimilation into the main-

stream of narrative tension suggests a rare and honest professionalism.

For its first half hour *THE YOUNG CAPTIVES* (Paramount), the same team's second picture, promises to be of equal interest. Again an unoriginal but compact melodrama concerned to humanise its characters, it tells of two eloping adolescents who give a lift to an oppressively charming and talkative oilfield worker whose motor cycle has broken down. He turns out to be a psychopathic killer hunted, like themselves, by the police. Unfortunately the war of nerves that follows never recovers from an unconvincing murder *en route*, partly because the writing is flaccid and partly because of the inexperience of the two leads. Even so, there are many striking touches, and Steven Marlo (the weightlifter from *Stakeout*) makes the young murderer at once horrifying and pathetic. His whimpering death amidst the wreckage of a smashed warehouse is oddly reminiscent of *Ashes and Diamonds*, and finds a recurring symbolism in the equally well handled scene of the three boys frantically searching a city dump for the lost heroin container in *Stakeout*. The common theme of disorientated youth consigned by society to the ash heap may be coincidental; it is admittedly none too cogently worked out; but there is no denying the sensitivity underlying the symbolism in both these highly individual beginners' films.—PETER JOHN DYER

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REFUGE ENGLAND (Connoisseur) and *ENGINEMEN* (B.F.I.). Both films made with assistance from the Experimental Film Fund. The last of the Free Cinema programmes was one of the best. It could not have been easy to find a film which *We Are the Lambeth Boys* would not overshadow; but Robert Vas's *Refuge England* proved to be one of the movement's most sympathetic productions. We are shown the first day in England of a Hungarian refugee with no English, little money, and a scrap of paper with an address that might be in any district of London. As he wanders backwards and forwards across the city, his lack of connection with the crowds about him twists his original cheerful optimism towards despair. No-one is interested in his plight or, it seems, his existence. The awful indifference of the city and its people nearly makes him give up, until finally he receives hospitality at the address he has been trying to trace.

Without self-pity this film hauntingly presents an individual picture of isolation, subtly changing through a whole series of moods from the first, wondering survey of the contradictions among the passers-by to the eventual unhappy gaze at the gaudy self-sufficiency of the West End in the evening. The day's incidents are felt rather than observed—a tiny, delightful moment when the refugee finds himself able to direct another lost foreigner, an encounter with a man mowing the lawn in his suburban garden which somehow crystallises the whole film. The conclusion, a simple matter of a spread tablecloth and cutlery and bread, has a purity all its own. The unostentatious use of evocative effects and music is particularly telling, and the performance of Tibor Molnar has a rare exactness.

Enginemen, the first film by Unit 57, seems at first sight to owe much to certain sequences of *Every Day Except Christmas*, though it appears in fact that none of the unit's members had seen Anderson's film. One of the best sequences occurs virtually at the beginning—a concentrated study of a workman raking out after an engine's run. Clipped comments and statements by the enginemen are heard against a series of shots of their canteen, but the technique is never as successful as it might have been had the visuals and track been more selective and more imaginatively combined. Too often it sounds as though the statements—which are mainly on the forthcoming changeover from steam to diesels—have been prompted by superficial questioning modelled on the style of a television interview; and the awkward, often stilted answers are seldom an apt accompaniment to the more natural images. But all the shots of the steaming, smoking engines are magnificent.

DEREK HILL

Power among men

ROBERT
VAS

RELUCTANTLY, THE REVIEWER must begin with a personal experience. He once had the rare distinction of acting as spectator at a United Nations General Assembly. It happened at the time of the Hungarian uprising in 1956; and his voluntary duty was to spend the night sitting on the third floor of a tenement house in Budapest, while the shooting went on in the next street, to listen to the radio and the news of the General Assembly sitting in New York. If something new happened, it must be reported without delay to the inhabitants of the house, hiding in the air-raid shelter. "They assembled," was the first story for them. Then: "they discuss," "they dissolve." And again: "they assembled." "They vote." "They denounce." It was a faint hope. In the streets there was bloodshed; something had to be done, we could not tell what, but something concrete and definite to stop violence. But what they said then was just generalities. The United Nations, however little doubt there might be of its willingness to help, had to stay out, to remain above the conflict.

It is this feeling of "generality" that one recalls on seeing films of the United Nations Film Service. *Out*, a poetic reportage, though dealing with actual people in a definite situation (Hungarian refugees awaiting re-migration on the Austrian border), is really a portrait of a feeling; of being a refugee, in general. It does not—for it *cannot*—deal with the question of why and from where they came. They just came, they are there; which is only the result of a cause and only part of a total truth. Though an effective and evocative picture, reflecting Lionel Rogosin's originality and feeling for mood, *Out* failed when it departed from generalities and tried to bring its fictional characters to life. In *Overture*, a fortunate basic idea blends the concrete and the general into a poetic unity. The factual, raw newsreel material of war in the Far East is counterpointed by Beethoven's Egmont Overture, thus ensuring the presence of something sublime and universal. The basic, humanist idea of the United Nations is visibly expressed by a shot of the floodlit U.N. skyscraper (which follows the shockingly down-to-earth images of horror), emerging as a monumental symbolic shield towards the sky.

Power Among Men (Contemporary), the new and to date the greatest undertaking of the U.N. Film Service which Thorold Dickinson heads, chooses a new way of expression. The humanitarian symbols are briefly represented (Hamlet: "What a piece of work is man!"); and this full-length, basically educational documentary tries to convey its message through direct contact with reality. It aims to sum up the intellectual principles of the Organisation through four separate episodes, which have dialogue, protagonists, little conflicts and climaxes. They deal with the possibility of human survival. The story of rebuilding an Italian mountain village, destroyed in the war, and that of the birth of a farming community in the stony fields of Haiti, represent man's ability to destroy and rebuild. An episode set in a newly grown industrial colony in Canada aims to show how man, conquering nature, still cannot get along with his own kind. In the final section we visit an atomic research establishment in Norway; and the summing-up comes from a scientist there: "We have learned to control things, but we must learn to control ourselves. Only the dead can afford not to care." Soberly ironical, self-confident words, spoken in a most sympathetic film—a difficult undertaking, made with belief, much goodwill, and an evident intention to find and develop a style. If, against its realist intentions, it again flutters in general about generalities, this is fundamentally not its creators' fault.

The aim here is to be comprehensive: the four stories are intended to cover some of the most important aspects and problems



"Power Among Men": building a farming community in the stony fields of Haiti.

of contemporary life. But the plots repeat themselves rather than adding to each other, and they cannot shape the film into a single artistic entity. The neutral and rather unimportant stories are dramatised attempts to express ideas, and without human content they emerge as too weak to carry their message effectively. They are told without much power; and what they miss is man. The story of a football match between Hungarian and Portuguese teams, ending in a scuffle, could itself be interesting. As handled here, it is too characterless to become a living part of the plot; and as a symbol of discord between nations, which is the obvious intention, it is a banal one. These narratives lack the emotional appeal to move us, and the intellectual superiority to convince. It is not accidental that the most startling and intense part of the picture does not belong to any story: it is a brief, horrifying intermezzo of exploding the Bomb, and the macabre, nightmarish poetry of these shots drives home the message so often forced in vain in the tightly constructed stories.

Sometimes, an unexpected contrasting effect or cut (as from the painfully distorted face of a Hiroshima victim with a deep slash in her neck to the shattered face of an ancient statue) brings the images suddenly to life, a reminder that the team consists of sensitive artists. The directors were Alexander Hammid and Gian Luigi Polidoro but the conception was Thorold Dickinson's; and the surface has his polish, taste and feeling for visual beauty, and a tender, almost elegant intellectualism which sometimes turns readily towards experiment. But the style as a whole is hardly a personal one: the film observes life from the viewpoint of an official U.N. delegation. It has, if there is such a thing, the style of an organisation—and of a *neutral* organisation.

One may call this "intellectual humanism," but it is really a kind of lukewarm, softened-up film-making; an educational film which does not add anything new to one's knowledge. It cannot afford to hurt anyone, and this prevents the film-makers from becoming really committed to their task. They serve an idea, but not the whole and only truth of life. The failure of *Power Among Men* is really the failure of the non-committed, non-personal documentary of purpose. The times have gone when mankind or its leaders could be warned through Beethoven overtures and quotations from *Hamlet*, when racial conflicts could be symbolised in terms of football matches. Struggling with such limitations, the United Nations Film Service might do better to continue its worthy contribution to the safer and more specialised field of educational and instructional films. Perhaps the "general problems of mankind" should be left to those who can deal with them in a more definite and passionate way: to Satyajit Ray, Buñuel and others. If it could be so, Buñuel's *Land Without Bread* would be the most effective United Nations documentary.

Face to Face:

ANDRÉ BAZIN

by RICHARD ROUD



André Bazin (left) with Alexandre Astruc.

WRITING ABOUT JAMES AGEE's work in the last issue of *SIGHT AND SOUND*, I commented on the way in which film criticism in the Anglo-Saxon countries is biased towards the impressionistic and the chatty, distrustful of theory. Basically, perhaps, critics suffer from the same feelings of inferiority as do teachers: deep in the Anglo-Saxon ethos is embedded the idea that those who can, do; those who can't, teach—or criticise. Furthermore, the cinema is still not generally considered a serious subject. Film critics, with few exceptions, are regarded as entertainers; and since people generally conform sooner or later to the idea society has of them, film critics become entertainers.

In France, the situation is quite different. First of all, criticism in general has always been considered important. The distinction between creative writing (poetry, plays, novels) and critical prose (essays, critiques) has never been as strong as in England and America. In the past fifty years especially, criticism has assumed an ever more important place in French literature. Valéry's collected criticism is ranked by many Frenchmen higher than his poetry, Gide's *Journal* higher than his novels and tales; and did not Gide himself declare that he would find the diary of Flaubert during the period when he wrote *Madame Bovary* more interesting (if it existed) than the novel itself?

It is essential for a proper understanding of French film

criticism to realise the enormous prestige attached to philosophical interpretation, aesthetic theorising and formal analysis. During the first years of the cinema in France, it was regarded, as elsewhere, as a *divertissement* for the masses, of little artistic significance. It was not until the end of the First World War that French intellectuals discovered the cinema—generally through the revelation of Charlie Chaplin. The 1920's were the first golden age of French film criticism: almost everyone—artists, writers and *littérateurs*—suddenly discovered that the cinema was an art. Or, rather, that it could be. But they also felt that they had to defend its right to be considered an art rather than simply a method of reproduction. So they fastened on the idea of *montage* as a proof that the cinema was an art form. The image itself, as a photograph of reality, was, they said, only the raw material: it was the arrangement of the succession of images that could make the cinema an art. Furthermore, the cinema acquired extra *cachet* as being the only art that could penetrate the world of dreams and the subconscious mind: this was the apogee of the surrealists, and the period when Freud's discoveries first infiltrated French culture. The important thing was to prove that the cinema was intellectually respectable. And this could only be done by surrounding it with what Anglo-Saxons are likely to consider an exorbitant amount of waffle.

The importance of André Bazin's criticism can best be understood if one sees it in this context of French attitudes towards the cinema. His collected criticism is dedicated to Roger Leenhardt and François Truffaut, the latter his protégé and the former his great predecessor. Leenhardt is known in England chiefly for his film *Dernières Vacances*, and for his numerous documentaries. But during the years from 1934 to the war, when he was writing the cinema column for the Christian-Left monthly *Esprit*, his ideas fertilised a whole generation and (to change the metaphor) prepared the way for the critical movement which began during the war and of which Bazin was the uncontested leader and prime mover.

Before Leenhardt, French thinking about the cinema had been dominated by two schools: the group referred to earlier, which believed in "artistic" cinema—the cinema of soft-focus photography, flashy effects, superimpositions, expressionistic or modernistic sets—and the group which considered the cinema important only as a mass art—like, says Leenhardt, the Marxist historian Georges Sadoul. Until the early 1930's the first group (represented by men like Brasillach, Moussinac and Jean-Georges Auriol) was the more influential. But the arrival of sound seemed to nullify their theories. They simply refused to accept it, and spent most of their time bewailing the good old days.

Even today [1935] it is questionable whether it is possible to love the film sincerely unless one knew it in the silent days, in those last years which are inseparable from the days of one's youth... But we who witnessed the birth of an art may possibly also have seen it die. Recalling all that it promised, we are left with the melancholy regret one feels for a thing foredoomed. (Bardèche and Brasillach)

One or two, however, did welcome sound. Benjamin Fondane, for example, thought sound was going to be magnificent—one more element to add to the repertory of symbolic *montage* effects. It would replace superimposition. How wonderful, he said, you can show a man thinking of his broken life and at the same time you will hear the sound of a glass breaking. Or you could show a family row while the sound of waves breaking on the shore was heard!

Roger Leenhardt, though, was neither an aesthete nor a social historian, but a film editor. He welcomed sound because, as he said, it was there and nothing could be done about it. The film critic, he thought, should not have a preconceived idea of what films *ought* to be like: his theories should be constructed on the basis of the films actually being made. He became enthusiastic about Hollywood films because he thought the Americans, with their dynamic empiricism, were

the only ones who knew what to do about the invention of sound film: they simply went ahead and made sound movies.

So while the aesthetic critics, prisoners of their theories, appreciated only Marcel l'Herbier, *Caligari* and, *à la rigueur*, René Clair, Leenhardt was boosting the American comedies, gangster pictures and films of social protest. He was also the first to appreciate the films of Jean Renoir—their lack of formalism, or carefully composed and consciously beautiful images, and their non-reliance on the classic elements of *montage*. Strongly influenced by Leenhardt's ideas, André Bazin carried them a few steps further; and Leenhardt, as he himself admits, gave up writing about the cinema because Bazin was his logical and accomplished successor.

2

André Bazin was born in Angers in 1918. From early childhood he had always wanted to become a teacher, and he went through the prescribed course of study at the Ecoles Normales. Although he passed his examinations brilliantly, he was refused a teaching post because of his stutter. Then came the war. Mobilised, Bazin spent the phoney war vegetating in a barracks at Bordeaux. His interest in the cinema had first been awakened by Roger Leenhardt's articles in *Esprit*; and now the enforced inactivity of barracks life, and the prompting of a fellow-soldier whose parents owned a whole chain of cinemas in Bordeaux, led him to spend all his free time at the movies. After the *débacle*, Bazin returned to civilian life and became friendly with Pierre-Aimé Touchard, one of the editors of *Esprit*, whose Leftish and Catholic viewpoint was sympathetic to him. When Touchard was put in charge of the Maison des Lettres, a kind of students' cultural association, he asked Bazin to direct the cinema section.

All Bazin's friends (Touchard, Claude Roy, and Leenhardt

himself) tell us that when they first knew him he was somewhat overfond of philosophical terms and abstract terminology. Touchard thinks that this was due to Bazin's bitterness about his lack of university training, and was an attempt to prove that he was not inferior to those who had more education than himself. But this interest in philosophy was also perhaps an attempt to provide himself with a solid basis for his critical work: a need which would not be felt in England or America, but would seem imperative in France. Furthermore, Bazin belonged to the generation which discovered and embraced existentialism. In his attempt to discover the essence of the cinema, he used the phenomenological approach of Sartre and Merleau-Ponty: he derived the essence of the cinema from experience of its existence. From this return to the source, this consideration of the ontology of the cinema, came his most important contribution to film aesthetics: the re-evaluation of *montage*.

Struck by certain resemblances between the silent films of Stroheim, for example, and the sound films of Renoir and Welles, Bazin argued that the traditional idea of a schism between the silent and the sound film was false. More important was the distinction between those directors who believed in the image and those, such as Stroheim, who believed in reality. By the image, Bazin implies everything art can add to the representation of reality: composition, stylisation of decor, lighting and acting, and, the most important element, *montage*. In his sense, *montage* can be defined as the creation—by cutting, juxtaposition, etc.—of a meaning which the individual images did not possess. The *montage* films of Eisenstein, Kuleshov and Abel Gance did not show an event: they evoked it. The meaning of their films remained rather in the organisation of the elements of reality than in those elements themselves.

Realism in depth: a scene from Visconti's "La Terra Trema."



The other school of directors—Stroheim, Murnau, Dreyer and Flaherty—did not use *montage* except in a purely negative way, to eliminate unnecessary elements. In *Nanook of the North*, for instance, there is a sequence in which Nanook hunts a seal. Rather than show us first Nanook, then the seal, then Nanook, then the seal—building up the impression of Nanook's anxious waiting through a *montage* effect—Flaherty filmed it all in one sequence. He did not suggest tension: he simply showed it to us. And this, Bazin said, is infinitely more moving. Now this kind of cinema could only be enriched by the invention of sound, since sound is an important element of reality. Therefore, concluded Bazin, if *montage*, stylisation and expressionism are not the very essence of cinema, then the coming of sound was not as radical a break as had been assumed. It killed a certain kind of cinema, but not *the* cinema.

The great connecting link between Stroheim, Dreyer, etc. and the 1940's and '50's was Jean Renoir. He understood their films, and he was able to continue in their tradition. In suppressing *montage*, he sought to maintain their respect for the unity of space which is implied by a non-montage procedure. To do this, he began to experiment in the early 1930's with composition in depth, frequent use of tracking and pan shots, and greater action within the frame. He was thus able to preserve the relationship between his characters and their surroundings; their natural and dramatic unity was not broken.

Although Bazin would have been the last to maintain that no other director of the 1930's made good films, his point was that the direction taken by the cinema since 1940 has been the one pointed out earlier by Renoir. One must always bear in mind that for Bazin film theory was valid only as an explanation of why films are made the way they are. An aesthetic is founded on what *is*. The trend which began with Renoir, towards less and less *montage*, longer and longer sequences, was intensified by Orson Welles and continued by Visconti, Rossellini and the younger French school. It is implied by composition in depth, allowing the director to show action without constant cross-cutting. It also presupposes a kind of lateral "depth of focus" which has since come to us in the form of CinemaScope. Bazin welcomed CinemaScope because it existed, but also because it seemed to him a logical continuation of the tendency to preserve scenic unity. CinemaScope, no less than Renoir's

depth of focus and Visconti's endless tracking and pan shots, permits a director to integrate the real duration of events and the actual relation of characters to dramatic space. Whether every director who uses CinemaScope realises this possibility is, of course, another matter: for Bazin, it was enough that it *could* be used in this way. And two recent French films *Les Amants* and *Une Vie*, provide examples of how effective it can be. Even before CinemaScope, however, dramatic events formerly achieved by *montage* could be presented more or less simultaneously and, more important, realistically. (An excellent example is the scene in *Citizen Kane* which shows us at the same time and in the same image Susan on the bed in the middle-ground, the fatal glass in the foreground, and Kane entering the room in the background.)

The effect is realistic because the continuity of dramatic space and dramatic time has been respected. Thus, for Bazin, depth of focus was not just one small element of cinematic syntax. It was of capital importance because it brought the spectator's rapport with the image closer to his rapport with reality. *Montage* unduly restricted the meaning of any given scene or event: the possibility of a richer, freer interpretation was the great advantage of the new method.

Bazin also welcomed the Italian neo-realist school because its new content was paralleled by its new form: the absence of all expressionism in the images, lighting, sets, and so on tended to give these films that sense of ambiguity which Bazin found in reality itself. This last concept is perhaps the most difficult to explain. What he meant, I think, is that the significance of objects, people and events depends on one's point of view. The classic *montage* procedure imposed one view, that of the director, to the exclusion of all others. Although the director's point of view will naturally remain clear, the freer system does not prevent one from sensing various meanings—not contradictory, perhaps, but complementary. The film, said Bazin, thereby gains something of the ambiguity, the multiple levels of interpretation and meaning, that have long been the privilege of the novel. The cinema is no longer a spectacle, but a language. Reality is neither evoked nor described: it is graven directly on to the film.

3

Bazin's reference to the novel is significant. He strongly disapproved of the purist view of the cinema, and the leading article of Volume Two of his collected criticism, *Qu'est-ce que le Cinéma?*, is a defence of film adaptations from plays and novels titled "Pour un Cinéma Impur."

Briefly, he thought that the whole idea of "spécificité cinématographique" (what we call *using the medium*) was not only out-dated but invalid. Surely, he maintains, adaptations such as *Le Journal d'un Curé de Campagne*, *Les Parents Terribles*, *Une Partie de Campagne* and *Greed* can stand comparison with any of the "pure" film masterpieces. The problem, then, is not whether to adapt but how. And here his main contribution was the insistence that you can make a better film if you respect the form of the original. Cocteau planned a film version of *Les Parents Terribles* in 1946, but later abandoned this "screen treatment" because he realised that the play's theatricality was part of its very essence and must be respected. In other words, Bazin said, Cocteau realised that the function of the camera was not to add, but to *intensify*. Instead of dissolving his play into a film (adding exteriors, transitions, flashbacks, etc.) he used the camera to underline, to sharpen, and to confirm his scenic structure and its psychological implications. The idea that *Les Parents Terribles* was an excellent movie but somehow not really a "film" is madness, Bazin said. One can only agree.



Composition in depth.
A deep focus image from "The Little Foxes".

As the stage-screen dichotomy has broken down since the war, so has the wall between the novel and the film—ever since Malraux filmed *L'Espoir* and then wrote the novel. Bazin, along with Alexandre Astruc, believed that the time has now come when the novelist can write his novel directly on film: the *caméra-stylo*. Bazin also believed that the art film (Resnais, Emmer, etc.) is one of the most important recent developments in the cinema. Most would part company from him at this point on aesthetic grounds. But one cannot deny the educational value of the art film; and Bazin never lost interest in the power of the cinema as a means of mass education. Nor did he forswear his concern for social problems. Although he was not particularly interested in the committed cinema (*cinéma engagé*), he maintained that the cinema cannot exist without taking into account the society it mirrors.

4

From his fairly humble beginnings in organisations like La Maison des Lettres, Jeunesses Cinématographique, and Travail et Culture, Bazin became the most important French film critic of his time. The volume of words he turned out was almost incredible. He was regular reviewer for a daily newspaper, *Le Parisien Libéré*; he took over Roger Leenhardt's column in the monthly *Esprit*; he wrote weekly for *L'Observateur* (now *France Observateur*) and for *Radio-Cinéma-Télévision*; occasionally for the now-defunct *Revue du Cinéma*, as well as other monthlies. He is best known, however, for his articles in *Cahiers du Cinéma*, of which he was an editor. It is perhaps due to him that this has become one of the most important film magazines in the world; or it might be more accurate to say that *Cahiers du Cinéma* owed a great deal of its vitality and interest to the interaction between Bazin and the younger members of the *Cahiers* team. Although they were all united by their admiration for certain directors (Murnau, Welles, Rossellini, Stroheim, Dreyer,

Bresson, etc.), it is nevertheless clear that the young Turks (not so young any more) were often in disagreement with Bazin. The two most notorious examples of this dissension were Bazin's articles attacking *Cahiers*' "Politique des Auteurs" and its "Hitchcocko-Hawksien" bias.

But Bazin's greatest influence may yet be seen in the films of his protégé François Truffaut (whose first feature, *Les 400 Coups*, is dedicated to him) and of the other young French directors who owe so much to the climate of opinion for which he, more than anyone else, was responsible.

Unlike James Agee, Bazin never did any creative work in the cinema. But I am sure that Bazin's contribution to the cinema will ultimately be seen to be more important than that of Agee. Not because Bazin was any more intelligent, nor because he had better taste. Indeed, it is amazing how often they agreed in their assessments. (Except for Welles, of course, whom Agee literally couldn't see.) Nor is it that Bazin was fundamentally any more serious than Agee. It is simply that Bazin had the luck to work in a milieu where art, aesthetics and form are taken far more seriously than they are in Britain and America. To be sure, the French can often overwhelm by an indiscriminate display of culture and erudition, by sheer wordiness and rhetoric and by occasional lunatic flights of fancy—and Bazin was not exempt from these faults. But he wrote for an audience which was passionately interested in the cinema. He did not have to try to entertain people for whom it was "a rather unimportant subject." One thing, ultimately, seems clear: the tradition in which Bazin wrote is more fruitful, more valid, and more fundamentally serious than that of Agee.

QU'EST-CE QUE LE CINEMA?, Vol. 1. *Ontologie et Langage*; Vol. 2, *Le Cinéma et les autres arts*. Published by Editions du Cerf, Paris. Volumes Three (containing Bazin's articles on cinema and society) and Four (on neo-realism) will be published later this year.

LOOK BACK IN ANGER

(Continued from page 123)

business of illustrating scripts with moving pictures. And sometimes the most self-consciously intellectualised images are outstandingly successful.

The scenes in the flat are mostly shot with a camera which moves incessantly and ingeniously—turning, tracking in and out, panning from side to side, often within a single shot. Again this is a risky device, a great pitfall for the tyro; and again it is used with outstanding success. (Especially credit is due here to the virtuosity of the cameraman, Oswald Morris. To a producer-director-scenarist team all working on their first film, the asset of a director of photography of Morris's experience must have been significant.) However exploratory, nervous, wandering, the camera movement is never obtrusive. We are not so much aware of a physical movement as of a sensation of turmoil and disturbance perfectly keyed to the action within the pictures.

Alongside these involved camera explorations goes an extreme use of close-ups, which are again employed expressively—never decoratively as they are generally used in the commercial cinema. It is interesting to notice how in three lines of dialogue and ten shots (shots 15 to 24 in the script extract on page 124), Richardson presents the whole situation and all the nuances of Alison's desertion of Jimmy. For expressiveness I would particularly commend the one close-up in which Alison, caught between Jimmy and Helena,

throws up her head like a frightened foal, perfectly imaging her helpless inadequacy.

Above all, where the film might have moved sluggishly, dragged down by the weight of dialogue on one hand and by this elaborate technique on the other, it is always rapid, quick, consistently exhilarating.

* * *

Look Back in Anger is a breakthrough—to a much greater extent, I believe, than *Room at the Top*, with which it must inevitably be compared. Here is a film which has something to say, and which says it without reference to conventional box-office values. It is a film in which a director has developed a personal style for the purposes of his theme. It is a film that can hold its own in the international field. It is a film with the power to excite you. And it is also a film which cost a quarter of a million pounds.

Can the breakthrough be maintained? We know our producers too well; and if *Look Back in Anger* makes money, they will be more inclined to produce disastrous imitations of the angry young man in the bed-sitter, than to find a way to give to young artists of Tony Richardson's calibre the degree of independence which he has had. The breakthrough will not be maintained by the series of films we can easily imagine, with Jack Hawkins as Porter or Dirk Bogarde as Porter or Kenneth More as Porter or John Mills as Porter. It will be by making use of Richardson's compeers—the young artists who, like him, have already proved themselves in the theatre and the *court-métrage* cinema.

DURING THE 1940'S ROBERT SIODMAK was one of the most interesting, and enigmatic, of Hollywood directors. Clearly a superior technician, to say the least, he chose—if choice it was—to do his best work in the misprized genres of the horror film and psychological thriller. His evident fascination with dramatic chiaroscuro and morbid psychology appeared at first glance an obvious extension of the classic German silent cinema; but seemed more curious if one remembered that his own contribution to the silent cinema in Germany was *Menschen am Sonntag* (1929), a charming piece of realistic observation. Siodmak made several films in Germany, then worked for some years in France (directing *Mister Flow*, *Cargaison Blanche* and *Pièges*, among others) before leaving Europe for America in 1940. During the last few years he has again been working in Europe.

I was able to meet Robert Siodmak on the set of his latest film, *The Rough and the Smooth*, which was then in its second week's shooting at Elstree. A small, balding man in his fifties (the textbooks say fifty-eight), he strikes one at once as energetic, cheerful and intensely efficient. He obviously knows just what he wants from players and technicians, and just how to get it with the maximum of good humour. In the intervals of setting up and shooting a short scene between Tony Britton and Najda Tiller over the dinner-table, he talked volubly about his films and their histories, darting off from time to time to adjust a light, check props or discuss points of interpretation with the players. Encouragingly, he turned out to like all the films one had hoped he would like—*The Spiral Staircase* is his favourite, closely followed by *Phantom Lady*, *The Suspect* and

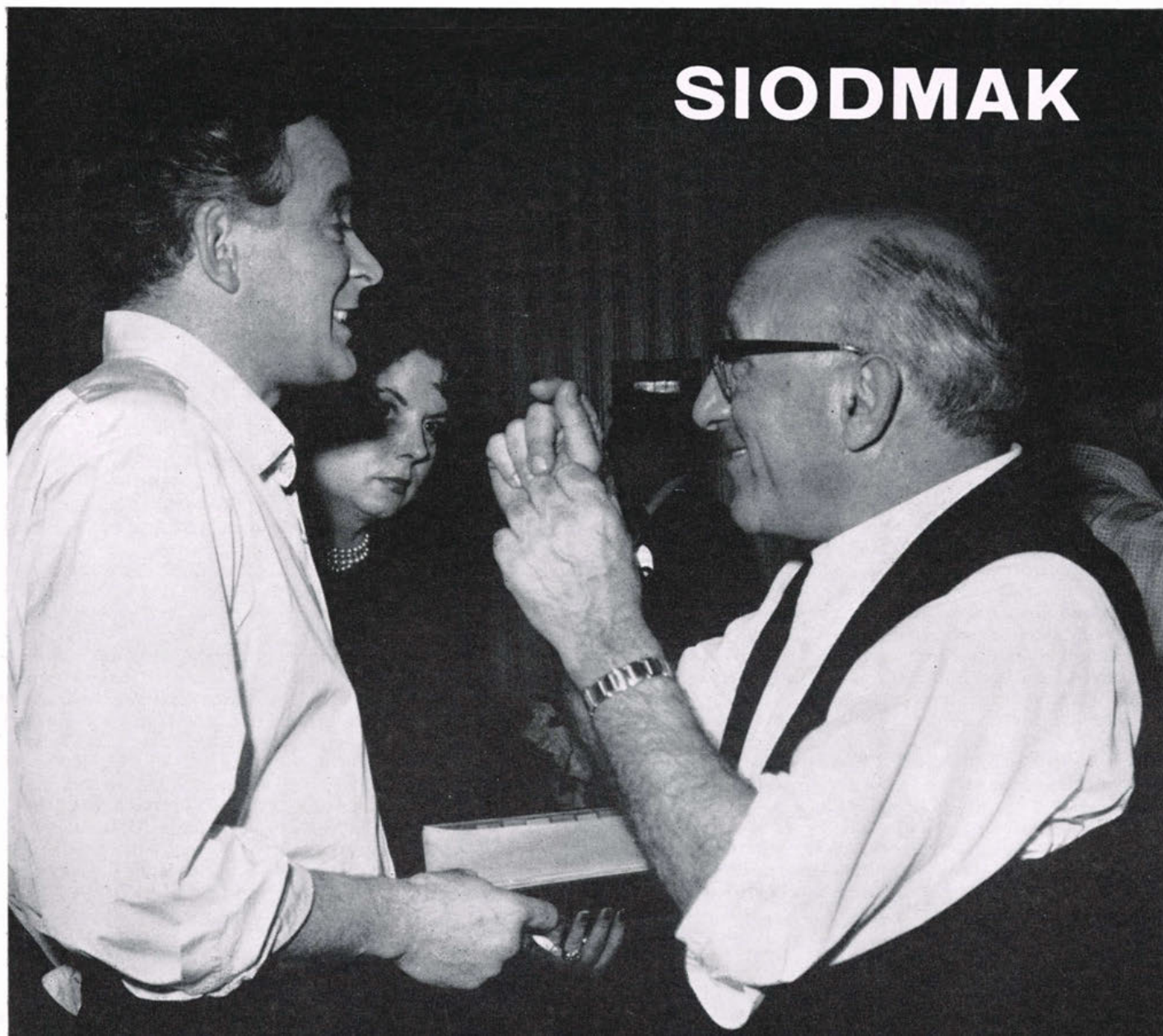
Uncle Harry—and to have trenchant comments to make about those he didn't and why he made them. He had little good to say of the first seven films he made in America (though he admits an affection for *Someone to Remember*), and dismissed most of the films after *The Dark Mirror* as pot-boilers. I said that I thought *Cry of the City* was easily the best of the really-shot-on-the-streets-where-it-happened cycle. He agreed that, "I thought it was good, but it's not really my type of film: I hate locations—there's so much you can't control." In any case, his standards are high: "Even in a film you make as you want to and because you want to, you're lucky if there are five minutes which satisfy you, in which you see just what you intended on the screen."

After more than thirty years in films, Siodmak retains an extraordinary enjoyment of the whole business of film-making:

RUSSELL TAYLOR:

Encounter with

SIODMAK



one suspects he found much pleasure and amusement in his battles with producers and stars as well as annoyance and frustration. Certainly he recounts his defeats as well as his victories with a relish which seems not entirely retrospective.

Menschen am Sonntag

YOU KNOW REALLY that was a nice little film. I saw it again recently at the National Film Theatre after many years, and I was very surprised to see how well it looked. I expected it to be much slower and heavier. It's amazing how simply you could film then: the little scene in the wood, when the girl takes the boy's hat and throws it into a tree, and then they have to climb to get it—that was quite impromptu. We just thought of a scene and filmed it straight off. Nowadays with all the technical paraphernalia of the studio, I often look at a set-up—a massively mounted camera and hordes of technicians—and think it's like an enormous zeppelin with a tiny gondola underneath: one says to oneself, there must be a more economical way of doing it.

Nowadays Billy Wilder is generally credited with the screenplay, but originally he got no screen credit, and in fact he didn't really work on the film for more than a few minutes. He and I are old friends, and at that time we were sharing a flat in Berlin; his mind was always teeming with ideas, for his friends' films as well as his own, and his only contribution to *Menschen am Sonntag* was the suggestion that we should leave the wife asleep at home, and when the husband returned in the evening she should still be sleeping. By the way, the version of *Menschen am Sonntag* shown at the N.F.T. is considerably shorter than the original. I have since seen a copy in Germany which has the whole of the first section missing, but the rest is much fuller.

Hollywood

WORKING IN HOLLYWOOD to get your own way you have to be cunning; you have to compromise sometimes, make films you don't want to from time to time (as Ford makes one or two to please producers for every one he makes to please himself). I developed a technique to get my own way about scripts. You see, if you refuse scripts too often or argue, straight away you get the reputation of being difficult; so, instead, when I was offered a script which I thought had a basically good idea, however mishandled, I would say, "Yes, fine, of course I'll do it," and then sit back while preparations went ahead. Then about a week before shooting was due to begin I'd go to the producer and say, "Look, this is a wonderful script, but there is just one little point..." and suggest a small but vital alteration. This would always be accepted, if only to keep the peace, and then of course other things would have to be altered to fit in with it, and gradually the thing would start coming to pieces at the seams. By the time we started shooting everything would be so confused that I began with no set script at all, and could do as I liked, which was the way I wanted it. . . .

Contract with Universal

IN 1943 I HAD BEEN in Hollywood for three years, doing what work I could get. Then Universal sent me the script of *Son of Dracula*: it was terrible—it had been knocked together in a few days. I told my wife I just couldn't do it, but she said to me: "Look, they've been making these films for twenty years, they know just what to expect from a director and just how much they're going to pay him," (I'd been offered \$150 a week for the three weeks shooting) "so if you're just that little bit better than their other directors... then they'll see right

away and it'll lead to better things." So I took the job, and on the third day of shooting they offered me a contract, with options, for seven years. I took it and our association was very happy: in fact, though my salary was supposed to rise gradually until I was earning \$1,100 a week in the seventh year, if I lasted that long, in fact they tore up the contract and by the third year I was earning about \$3,000 a week. As for *Son of Dracula*, we did a lot of rewriting and the result wasn't bad: it wasn't good, but some scenes had a certain quality . . .

Cobra Woman

COBRA WOMAN WAS SILLY but fun. You know, Maria Montez couldn't act from here to there, but she was a great personality and believed completely in her roles: if she was playing a princess you had to treat her like one all through lunch, but if she was a slave-girl you could kick her around anyhow and she wouldn't object—Method acting before its time, you might say.

Christmas Holiday

A GOOD PLOT (though the studio always wanted to change my psychological endings into physical ones, when the Hayes Office didn't intervene, as in *Uncle Harry*), and interesting casting Gene Kelly in such a way as to suggest a sinister quality behind a rather superficial charm. Deanna Durbin was difficult: she wanted to play a new part but flinched from looking like a tramp: she always wanted to look like nice, wholesome Deanna Durbin pretending to be a tramp. Still, the result was quite effective, and oddly enough did very well: I suppose everyone was so interested to see what Deanna Durbin would be like in a dramatic role. However, she never tried it again . . .

The Suspect

CHARLES LAUGHTON IS ONE of the few lasting friends I made in Hollywood (another is James Mason), but I hardly knew him



"Some scenes had a certain quality . . ."
Lon Chaney in "*Son of Dracula*".

at the time of *The Suspect*. I had heard he was difficult to work with, and certainly we had the greatest difficulty in finding anyone to act with him. I had his last four or five films run through for me, and then went and talked to him. "I think I've found out why no one wants to act with you: it's because you're a perfectionist. You read and consider the whole script until you know just how the film should be made and all the parts played to fit in with your conception, and if you don't get sympathetic co-stars and director, you just give up and take refuge in playing your own part all out and swamping the rest of the picture. I'll tell you what we're going to do: I'm not going to give you a script. Each evening we'll go over the next day's material and discuss anything in your part, but not talk at all about the rest." He agreed to this, and then on set to keep him occupied I'd invent dozens of special jobs for myself; beg him, as a favour, to rehearse the other players in his scene for me (he's a brilliant director of actors), and then shoot the result the way I wanted it, which kept us both happy.

I had also been warned that about half-way through a film Laughton always had a bout of uncertainty and convinced himself that the interpretation was wrong from beginning to end. Eventually he arrived one morning, hair all awry, and began, "Robert, I haven't slept a wink. I've just realised we've been completely wrong..." But this time I jumped him at the post, throwing the biggest hysterical fit of temperament I've ever thrown in my life, so that in the end he forgot his qualms trying to quieten me and keep me happy. After the film was over he told someone, "You know, Robert's a good director, but so temperamental: I had to soothe him every morning we were shooting."

The Killers

I THINK IT'S NOT widely known that the script was in fact by Huston. His name didn't appear on the credits because he was under contract to another studio at the time, but he wrote the script for us in his spare afternoons (with Tony Veiller cracking the whip occasionally). He was very pleased with the result and what we made of it. Hellinger was quite a reasonable producer, but with his journalistic training he always insisted on each scene ending with a punch line and every character being over-established with a telling remark, which in my opinion took a lot of the reality out of the film. So I always cut out the punch-lines when he wasn't looking: it drove him wild for a bit, but finally he got the idea. The robbery scene in one long crane shot was done in a single take: everything was very confused, with people not knowing where they ought to be, a car backed



up wrong and left in the middle of the road, and so on, but curiously enough the result turned out to give just the right effect when we printed it.

Time Out of Mind

THAT WAS A preposterous film. When Universal-International made their agreement with Rank I was due to make a film in Britain, and I was just ready to set off when they gave me the script of *Time out of Mind*, which was to be Phyllis Calvert's first American film. I said the story was absurd (who can sympathise with a main character who doesn't believe steam will ever supplant the sailing ship?), refused to direct it and left as planned for New York. Apparently this put the studio on the spot and they sent a deputation literally on its knees begging me to come back and direct it. I said no, and after my agent had taken over they gave me a mad contract whereby they trebled my salary for two years and gave me the right to veto the finished film's release if I didn't like it. Of course Maury Gertsman and I had a great time loading the film with every crazy effect we could think of, and in the end I didn't have to use my veto, as they played the film for just one day in a tiny Park Avenue cinema and then it disappeared for ever...

The Great Sinner

FOR THE GREAT SINNER I was loaned out to MGM. They gave me an enormous script, and after reading it I said that if it was filmed the way it stood the picture would run for six hours. No one took any notice, so I went ahead and filmed it, with any elaborations that occurred to me as we went along, and when we had cut out anything superfluous (my elaborations being the first things to go) it still ran for six hours. After that we cut and cut until it came down to three hours, but it was still too long, terribly slow (Gregory Peck, naturally a slow talker, seemed so impressed by the idea of acting in Dostoevsky that he played at about a third even of his usual speed), heavy and dull, with the additional disadvantage that now the story didn't even make sense. By the first preview we had cut it down to two hours and ten minutes. Bits of it went well, especially the death scene at the beginning, with Ava Gardner in silhouette (I liked that, but it was later removed). At that point I washed my hands of the film, and heard nothing for some time until a message came that "they"—at MGM it is always "they"—had decided that what was needed was a new and stronger love story. They wanted me to reshoot, but I refused and Mervyn LeRoy was given the job. When I eventually saw the finished film, I don't believe that a single scene was left as I had made it.

After Hollywood

LE GRAND JEU WAS just a pot-boiler, but I have made my three recent German films entirely as I wanted. Filming *Die Ratten* I made an English-speaking version with my own money, gambling that before long Curd Jurgens and Maria Schell would become international stars. It looks as if my gamble is about to pay off. Last year I co-produced a series of half-hour television films, *O.S.S.*, directing the pilot and one other myself, and this year I directed a couple of pilots for a series called *The Killers* (no connection, but it's a good title). I haven't been able to sell them yet: sponsors say they're too intelligent... I'm pleased with *The Rough and the Smooth*. I wanted to film Robin Maugham's book four years ago, but lost it to two successive producers who failed to film it. Then out of the blue came an offer to direct it for George Minter. I think it'll be good...

Burt Lancaster and Phil Brown in "The Killers".

Defence through FIDO

by DEREK HILL

AT THE BEGINNING of February, 1958, when plans for setting up the Film Industry Defence Organisation were first announced, George Singleton, President of the General Council of the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association, declared himself hopeful that within the next eighteen months old feature films would largely have disappeared from television screens. Few of the exhibitors present at the Council's meeting doubted that the end of cinema films on television was in sight; their chief concern was that eighteen months seemed far too long a time lag. The eighteen month period is now over, and a first impression from a glance at the *Radio Times* and *TV Times* is that the Defence Organisation, appealingly abbreviated to FIDO, has been less effective than expected.

Duncan Crow, writing in the Autumn, 1957, *SIGHT AND SOUND*, stated that during the first six months of 1957 an average of 2½ feature films a week were screened on BBC and all ITA channels. The average for the first six months of 1959 was exactly the same, *without taking into account transmissions of features by commercial stations outside London*. The average number of films presented by the BBC and all four commercial channels is around eight a week—but it must be remembered that the provincial stations are using films already presented on the London channel.

None of the television authorities are prepared to admit that FIDO has seriously affected their source of film supply. The BBC recalls very strong industry opposition to their attempts to purchase the rights of old British films, and admits that one deal which seemed all set up fell through because of the pressure which the industry brought to bear. But they insist that this was before FIDO was formed. In the month before FIDO was announced, they point out, only two features were presented on BBC television. Eighteen months later—in July, 1959—five were shown.

FIDO was the result of prolonged wrangling within the film

industry over the possibilities of some form of defence against television. Alarm was prompted by the steep decline in cinema attendances from 1950, as television licence sales increased. (The 1950 attendance of 1,400 million was almost halved by 1958, when it sank to 740 million. TV licences rose from half a million in 1950 to 8½ million in 1958.) It was natural that much of the industry's resentment should centre on television's use of their own product. "We've no quarrel with television," the Secretary of FIDO told me, "but we don't like them using our cast-offs." Resentment reached a peak with the acquisition by ABC Television of 25 Korda films and the BBC's purchase of a hundred RKO films when that company went out of business. It finally erupted when *The Seventh Veil* was transmitted. That night cinema business all over the country dropped by 15 per cent. The next morning exhibitors were saying that this was an even more urgent menace than Entertainments Tax.

The deadlocks of past trade association meetings were forgotten. Schemes were put forward by the CEA and the Federation of British Film Makers, but both were thought weak because they would not affect the screening of films on television after ten o'clock at night. Finally a proposal by Cecil Bernstein, earlier dismissed as impractical, was considered again. This time the five trade organisations approved the scheme in principle, and while the organisation was being set up they announced: "If any producer or distributor enters into a contract after today's date (4th February, 1958) to allow any feature film, either British or imported, to be shown on television in the United Kingdom, exhibitors will not book any films from that producer or distributor." There were 53 votes in favour and one abstention.

The Bernstein scheme took into account the fact that the temptations to sell the television rights of a backlog of films were considerable, and that threats of sanctions alone, while undoubtedly effective, were hardly likely to encourage the united front which the industry so longed to show its competitors. He suggested the establishment of an agency to acquire the television rights of British films through a fund raised by a levy on exhibitors. The levy was fixed at a farthing per cinema seat sold, with complete exemption for exhibitors whose total takings were below £200 a week. (This excluded 1,800 cinemas.) The income from the levy was estimated at between £500,000 and £750,000 a year.

The uproar that followed was considerable. Many exhibitors understandably felt that it was tactless to expect them, the hardest hit of all the industry, to be exclusively responsible for putting up the money for such an experimental scheme. If it didn't work, they would be worse off than ever before; and if it did, every side of the industry would benefit from something which they alone had financed.

More opposition came from Sir Michael Balcon, for whom threats of sanctions could hardly have been voiced at a less happy moment. He was in process of disposing of a hundred Ealing films to ABC Television, and when the Federation of British Film Makers decided by a majority vote to join FIDO he thundered, "We remain against it to our dying day. Even if the scheme is legally defensible, the application of sanctions to Ealing is, in our view, morally indefensible on films made by us with our own money entirely free of any levy. We think this step was taken after nearly everyone in the industry had sold their backlog of films or by people who have no films to sell. Pictures are still being obtained on the black market basis, and my understanding of the decision is that certain of the film companies with TV interests will not give any undertaking about the non-playing of these films if they are available."

The sharpest reaction of all came, not unexpectedly, from the television companies. Associated TeleVision claimed: "We have reported FIDO to the commission set up to examine restrictive practices and have briefed counsel in anticipation of a fight. We are prepared to spend more money than the film trade could possibly afford to buy any particular series if we need it. Supposing we offer £500,000 for one batch of films in order to use the rights for two years, is FIDO in a position to

beat this figure? We are also prepared to remind the Government that it cannot remain neutral in this dispute. Many of the films we might be interested in were made through the financial support of the National Film Finance Corporation. Some of them lost money at the box office; they could hardly make much more as second runs. Our offer for such features will assist the N.F.F.C., the Government and for that matter the public in seeing that the money advanced for these disappointing "cinema" features could be repaid as a result of their sale to commercial television."

This nice concern for the public was virtually all the attention the interests of audiences and/or viewers received during the general snarling. When the air cleared, however, FIDO was seen to be comfortably established, and the trade press was full of happy headlines about watchdogs and bites that were worse than barks. In August, 1958, the Organisation was registered at Somerset House. Its declared objects were: "To promote, further and protect the interests, financial welfare and success of the cinematograph film industry in the United Kingdom, particularly by promoting co-operation between the Association of Specialised Film Producers, the British Film Producers Association, the Cinematograph Exhibitors Association, the Federation of British Film Makers and the Kine Renters Society, etc."

2

At the end of April, 1959, FIDO issued its first Press statement. Its principal points were that nearly £300,000 had been collected in levies during the Organisation's first 32 weeks; and that over £27,000 of this had been spent on formation, running costs, and on acquiring covenants of 15 British feature films, all more than ten years old. "Many thousands" of features, according to the statement, had not been offered to television as a result of FIDO's negotiations. The acquisition of a further 31 features was in hand. And although old films were still appearing on television, these were merely the backlog which the companies had acquired before FIDO came into being. But for FIDO, the report concluded, "it is clear beyond any doubt that anything up to 15 films a week might now be showing on U.K. television."

It appeared that everyone had been co-operating splendidly. Only seven exhibitors throughout the whole country had failed to pay their levies, and six of these cases were settled at the time the report was written. The balance in hand and, doubtless, the desire to keep the contributing exhibitors happy, led FIDO to reduce the levy by 50 per cent during the always difficult months of June, July and August.

FIDO's secretary, Mr. W. J. Speakman, himself an exhibitor, assured me that criticisms of the Organisation had almost disappeared. The only exhibitors still quarrelling with the whole idea of FIDO were, he explained, a noisy minority whose cinemas were so small that they didn't have to contribute anyway; in fact he couldn't think what they had to complain about. Sir Michael Balcon's opposition had largely vanished after FIDO had negotiated a deal with ABC Television which would ensure that forty of the hundred Ealing films acquired would not be shown on television. And no more had been heard of ATV's threatened legal action. As for ATV's jeers at FIDO's financial capabilities, Mr. Speakman agreed that his Organisation could not hope to challenge the kind of offer commercial television could make. "But we have the power of enforcing sanctions," he reminded me, "sanctions designed to make a producer decide whether his income is to come from the film or television industries."

In America, he added, there are sometimes as many as 18 films shown during one day's television. FIDO was ensuring that such a position could never arise in this country. The BBC had been forced to withdraw a series of film presentations which it had already advertised. One film company which had already sold the television rights of its film backlog was so impressed by FIDO's arguments that it actually bought them back again. So far it had not been necessary to impose the threatened

boycott on any producer or distributor; nor, so far as he could see, was it ever likely that this situation should occur*. Rank, ABC and Carreras had all promised not only that they would not sell their productions to television, but that they would not even ask FIDO to buy them—an assurance that would keep thousands of films off TV without costing FIDO a penny.

Despite the figures, Mr. Speakman felt that there were considerably fewer films on television than before and that all channels were spreading their stock thinly to make it last. A few pictures, he admitted, did from time to time "slip through the net." But FIDO's main interest was to ensure that substantial series were not made available to television. They were certainly not concerned about the decision of Contemporary Films to sell the television rights of the Japanese war film *The Burmese Harp* to the BBC. This was a film which had been turned down by all the West End exhibitors. If they did not consider it had sufficient appeal for presentation in their cinemas, they could hardly argue that its TV showing constituted any kind of competition.

Mr. Charles Cooper of Contemporary admitted that selling this feature to television had meant a definite financial loss. "It would be almost impossible to bring a foreign film into this country with the idea of making a profit solely from its television showing and 16mm. release," he said, "though it's well worth considering for shorts—which will sometimes make considerably more on their 16mm. release than on their 35mm. bookings. Once a film is shown on television, exhibitors who are members of the CEA will not book it even though they may want to—which is what is happening now on *The Burmese Harp*. I think the CEA's ruling on this might be altered in such circumstances."

He suggested that there is no reason why foreign films which have been given theatrical distribution should not be shown on television afterwards. John Grierson had made a very good offer for Part Two of *Ivan the Terrible*, which he intended to show complete on a national hook-up. Obviously Contemporary couldn't accept this before the cinema presentations had ended; but was there any reason why it shouldn't be shown afterwards? FIDO would have to be consulted, but if the great majority of exhibitors were uninterested in the film, what objections could there be? The way does, in fact, seem open for television presentation of virtually any films which the cinema circuits turn down. As far as audiences go, it is worth noticing that *The Burmese Harp*, a difficult (and sub-titled) film shown fairly late on a Sunday evening, was according to the BBC watched by 4.5 million people, against 6.75 million for the Rogers-Astaire *Carefree*, shown in the same week.

One television bogey, much in the minds of the film industry a few years ago, no longer seems capable of rousing much interest. Toll, slot or pay television, which seemed about to produce unheard-of fortunes for television and disaster for the cinema exhibitors, is still being considered in America by the Federal authorities, but no one seems to feel that much will come of it. A few experiments have been made; and although they have all been on a small scale, the results have invariably been disappointing for the sponsors. *Variety* recently suggested four major reasons why the revolution was unlikely to materialise. First, they insisted somewhat brutally, there is simply not enough creative talent to feed toll TV with material for which people would consistently pay; second, the kind of programmes which would be most likely to earn a fortune for their sponsors are exactly the kind of spectacular shows that television is poorly equipped to present and show off to advantage; third, the major sporting events which would bring in the really big money are too infrequent; and finally—and with crushing conviction—if there actually were such fortunes waiting to be made, we would by now have seen much more action and have heard far less talk.

*Since this was written, the situation appears to have changed slightly. FIDO is reported to be considering imposing sanctions on the producer David Selznick, who recently negotiated a 20-film deal with the B.B.C.

Preston Sturges



ONE MORNING IN LONDON I opened *The Times* and saw, with shock and disbelief, that Preston Sturges was dead. I had earnestly assumed that Preston Sturges would *never* die. Only five days before, we saw him in New York, bursting with vitality, hale and hearty, roaring with laughter as usual. He had just submitted to a routine physical check-up and told us he'd received "the bad news": he'd survive indefinitely. "That's enough time," he said on that day, "to learn a new trade . . ."—reflectively looking at the ceiling—" . . . perhaps dentistry."

My husband was completing a portrait of him, and Preston sat in the sunny room, handsome and debonair, strumming a guitar, singing snatches of songs from his new musical *Zozo*, and repeating anecdotes from his autobiography to be published this fall—which he called, with fine good humour, *The Events Leading Up to My Death*.

He had been through several mightily insolvent years, and his current modest affluence amused him a little. When I first met him at Paramount Studios in Hollywood during the war, he was at the financial peak and producing prolifically. His gaiety, extravagant generosity and flamboyance made him seem eccentric even there. But he never changed his manners and ways; he was not dependent on circumstance.

As an assistant film editor at the studio, eager to learn from The Master, I seized every opportunity to watch him at work on the set, to sit at his crowded table in the commissary at lunch, and to attend gatherings in his opulent office. There he wittily presided, surrounded by things for us all to enjoy: old books, new books, works of art, food, drink, gadgets (many his own inventions), amusing toys, musical instruments, and always, people. A steady stream of odd, delightful characters enlivened his premises—and how he loved to talk! He had a prodigious interest in the *curiosa* of life; there was hardly any subject that he could not discuss with expertise, and he was a gifted raconteur.

With an apprentice's arrogance, I sometimes set forth certain theories of my own. He listened. But when I said, admiring his perfectionism, that there was clearly only one "right way" to treat a subject or scene, he sharply rejected my compliment and informed me that there are an infinite number of perfectly right ways to do anything at all. When I stated categorically that a certain actor, then out of favour, was without talent, he was annoyed. After reviewing the man's accomplishments for me, he explained that one should not let fashion form one's reactions, but should approach the sum of a man's work with a mind uncluttered by current clichés.

Preston was at that time at the height of his popular success; his personal income was among the top few in the United States. But eventually he too was a victim of that form of criticism he had defined as irrational, and I began to hear his work described as "period", "limited", "superficial." As a matter of fact, he was the greatest American film satirist. The body of his work will go down in cinematic history, each

hilarious comment on some antic aspect of human mores: *McGinty*, dirty politics; *Morgan's Creek*, notions on sex; *Hail, the Conquering Hero*, military idols; *Christmas in July*, the contest and quiz show mania; *Sullivan's Travels*, the pseudo-artist in conflict with reality; and all the others. In each, as an English critic remarked, the form met the content in perfect felicity.

A few weeks before he died, he showed one of his films at a party—*The Palm Beach Story*, a delicious invention concerning the young, smart and moneyless set. Preston enjoyed it immensely and gave us a running commentary on the skill of the film editor, the admirable score, the deftness of the actors—as if he had not made the picture at all. I think of that as typically Sturges—his generous perception of other talents and his unselfconscious acceptance of his own.

With all his grandness, he was quite without sham, in no sense a poseur. Money meant very little to him: it was to spend, and he was certainly never ashamed of being broke, a condition to which he bowed with a good-humoured shrug. He had made very much more of the stuff than the careful little craftsmen who describe themselves as artists but measure talent only by what is paid for it. Preston carried his genius with him, that was his capital. In a tiny New York hotel room, surrounded by friends, or in Paris, working on a play, with an old Rolls Royce station wagon and a good butcher one could chat with about a reasonable fillet, he was quite as magnificent as when he owned, as a little sideline, one of the best restaurants in America, *The Players*.

I think his critics confused the man with his work. His personality was big, of another time, Dumasian, Twainesque. I shall always remember Preston as a fabulous presence, larger than life. In these days of conformity, he was the complete individual, with a healthy ego and a healthy respect for any kind of person with a spark of joy or creativeness. He made his life one long adventure . . . and left us wonderful things to remember him by.

NEL KING

OUR LAST STURGES FILM was *The Diary of Major Thompson*, mangled from the cutting room, fragmentary, too much in the illustrative French manner, but still funny . . . at least so I found it, helped by the long gap since we'd last laughed with him, and then sliding back imperceptibly to his Golden Age.

For it was, with *The Lady Eve*, *Palm Beach Story*, *Sullivan's Travels*, and *Hail, the Conquering Hero*, a precious glint out of the West, when in Europe the sun had already gone down. Humour is essentially arcadian, whether in *Candide* or *Alice in Wonderland*; that's to say it depends on equanimity, on style; and style up to a point Sturges had—impudent, worldly wise, explosive, and elegant. A liner's dignified voice is

Above: Sturges and cast on the set of "Palm Beach Story".

answered by a river boat's peep; before even the titles go up we may be plunged into a gun battle on a train top (and this in the days before the screen overture had become usual), to find that it is all a scenario being shot; the white wedding is likely to be a bloody rush; he loves romps and exploits them superbly. In this he resembles Clair, the Clair of *An Italian Straw Hat* and *Le Million*; it is the chase of the old silent knockabouts turning to speech and dance. Clair pressed the development further, Sturges retained an impudent playfulness combined with an acidulated social sense. He mingled sophistication and crudity as do the great clowns, or a super practical joker like Maurice Cole reviewing the fleet. There was an unholy glee in those Sturges comedies which burst gratefully upon a world preoccupied with survival.

My own favourite among them is *Palm Beach Story*, if only for our delirious introduction to the Ale and Quail Club: those sporting gentlemen, dressed to kill, boarding a train at the terminus, urging on their pack of hounds. As the journey proceeds and the sleeping cars settle down, the roisterers in the bar remember their hounds back in the luggage van; and release them with whoops and shrieks to drive through the train. Soon there's a shoot in the bar. They can only be quelled by being ushered into the end carriage and dropped from the train. Goodbye, good fellowship! Farewell, huntsmen! Never again will the rabbit male get-together strike awe in the heart of an onlooker.

The curious thing about this caricaturist—in the sense that includes Rowlandson and Daumier—with his packed, active screen, is that he should have quite a streak of sentiment. It isn't sentimentality. It leaks out not only in parodies, which cherish some of the feelings they mock, but in efforts to express or at least unearth a love of humanity. That Sturges scarcely succeeded in this does not in itself fatally reduce him: indeed it is the fate and inspiration of most comedians. What is damaging is that, so yearning, he shouldn't have been able to go on splashing satire and discovering fun. The giddy whirl declines into raucousness; he tries being serious and can't square it with side-splitting; he lacks that sense of balance and the past which buoyed up Clair through exile and a falling-off of lyrical gifts. The only film that veers off gaiety into true sympathy is *Sullivan's Travels*, and for this reason it is preferred by many; though even here, while he manages the transition from light to deep, he can't satisfactorily flit back.

Sturges was a thoroughly professional man, who served his apprenticeship in scripting, knew every minor actor who would occupy a brief corner of his screen, could hold his own with executives and public; in this too resembling Clair. Where he has been less fortunate is that Hollywood, devouring more talent than it ever produces, has swallowed up these "old" films, which should be the rep. houses' and the film societies' recurring joy. None of the films mentioned, except the most recent, has been seen in London for years. What has become of them? Are they at the bottom of some scrap-heap, still intact? Is it now too late to start a cry for what must surely be among the brightest achievements of the American cinema?

G. W. STONIER

JEAN BENOIT-LÉVY

JEAN BENOIT-LÉVY, DIRECTOR of some four hundred documentary, educational and feature films, author of *Visual Instruction in the United States* (1936) and *The Art of the Motion Picture* (1946), a leading lecturer in Europe and America, and Delegate-General of the International Film and Television Council, died in Paris on August 2nd at the age of 71. He began his career with his uncle, Edmond Benoit-Lévy, a pioneer of the French cinema, and after several years as an assistant director made his first feature, *Pasteur*, in 1922, in collaboration with Jean Epstein. Four years later, he and Marie Epstein sprang into prominence with *Peau de Pêche*, a charming story about a slum child which predicted the freshness of a whole series of films affording luminous glimpses of a tender world of unschooled children in their everyday surroundings. The most famous of these were *La Maternelle* (1933, with Madeleine Renaud), and *La Mort du Cygne* (1937), set in a ballet school. After making his last feature film, *Feu de Paille*, in 1939, he went into wartime exile in the United States, where he took up three college professorships, various lecture tours, and (in June, 1946) the Directorship of the Film and Visual Information Division of the United Nations Department of Public Information. In 1952 he returned to Paris to make 25 ballet films for *March of Time* and French television, and then became a United Nations consultant-supervisor on the production of French educational films.

Book Reviews

THE SLIDE AREA: Scenes of Hollywood Life, by Gavin Lambert. (Hamish Hamilton, 15s.)

IT IS THE BEST FICTION, the best book I have ever read about Hollywood, one of the reasons being that it is not about Hollywood except in the sense that *South Wind* is about Capri (I enjoy it, I hasten to say, much better than I enjoy *South Wind*). It comes out of Hollywood, or rather out of the encounter between that rainbow octopus of the desert and an observer from an older, solidier world.

When I first heard that Gavin Lambert was off to California to work as script-writer, assistant, I don't quite know what, in one of the studios, I wondered whether his talent—which as exercised in

film criticism I had long admired—was tensile enough to stand the strains of America. I heard no more until three years ago, just about the time when the action of the stories which make up *The Slide Area* begins, I found myself in Los Angeles, trying to get the hang of Hollywood. Easy enough to recognise the people, the places, the activities one had been hearing about and reading about for half a lifetime. But there had to be a kitchen dump somewhere. Gavin Lambert it was who, half in mischief, half in apprehension, perhaps, of a taste for the incongruous matching his own, pointed past the shaven green terraces of Beverly Hills, past the closely screened houses of the stars and the tycoons, to a dingy Alsatia by the ocean: to Muscle Beach and the waste of rotting bridges and miasmic, oily canals which some fairground dreamer once composed and called Venice. I thought gratefully of that when I read this loosely but safely connected chain of incidents, meetings, conversations, portraits.

Not that the book is concerned with the underworld of the Pacific coast (though it has a notable description of that Venice). But its subject is a verge of society, a fringe which, like the perilously crumbling cliffs, the "slide areas" of the first episode, is always fraying. Its characters are mostly the eccentrics and the revolters, the anti-social figures thrown up by a conformist civilisation; or perhaps I should say thrown out, since in a desperate centrifugal movement they struggle endlessly towards the horizon. The sun-worshipper on the beach turning his back on humanity; the dangerous, incalculable boy who needs a companion to give him the

feeling that he exists—these are slipping over the edge; the mad, blind old Countess deluded by skinflint nieces into believing that she is travelling round Europe has vanished from life altogether.

The gifted film director who has let himself be trapped into directing commercial bosh sees the ground cracking and carrying him away. Even the conformist struggling not to escape but to get in, even the moronic film-struck girl who achieves a role in *High School Ghoul*, feels insecure. Delicately the author leads us from the risky verges to the solid-seeming centre, from the characters who belong to Hollywood only through some biological or geographical accident to Julie Forbes, a star for thirty years. The figures are rarely drawn in detail: a few fine strokes, but against the more densely described background they stand out sharply. And suddenly you see that Julie Forbes herself, a predatory, vengeful bitch, has her moments of doubt.

The portrait has an attack beside which Odets' *The Big Knife* looks friendly. But *The Slide Area* is not, thank goodness, a destructive book. The people who write about Hollywood, those who are not idolators, are usually full of hatred; here is an author who has the faculty, rarer than you might suppose, of simply liking. Difficult to fault his style with its precise communication of inconsequent talk, its mingling of melancholy and wry fun. It is the strength of the book that it expresses not merely affection for the figures on the impermanent slopes, but a protective feeling which makes their danger the more touching. I need not have wondered about the effect of America on Gavin Lambert. What the experience of Hollywood has done is to make of him a real writer.

DILYS POWELL

MY STORY, by Mary Astor. (Doubleday, New York. \$3.95.)

FIRST PERSON PLURAL, by Dagmar Godowsky. Illustrated. (Viking, New York. \$3.95.)

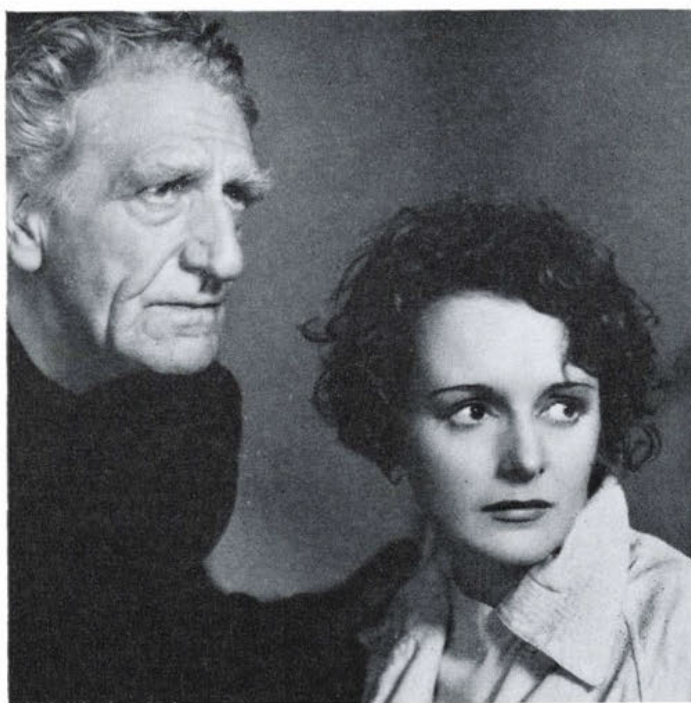
WITH THE MUZZLE TIGHT ON *Confidential* and its kennel mates, film gossip is back outside the bedroom door. But while the view through the keyhole is (at least) temporarily blocked, the spate of true confessions goes on. After Lillian Roth's *I'll Cry Tomorrow* and Diana Barrymore's *Too Much, Too Soon*, comes Mary Astor's autobiography, *My Story*.

How it came to be told at all makes interesting reading. Fifty years old, with her bank balance in the red, and her career awash in vodka, Miss Astor set down the story of her life as an experiment in auto-analysis for a priest (who happened also to be a professor of psychology). The experiment succeeded. But there was more to come. "Father Ciklic reached into his files and drew out a formidable stack of paper. 'This belongs to you,' he said, 'you wrote it for me as a biographical sketch, an auto-analysis, and it helped us greatly in our work together; but I feel that by now you know much more about yourself than when this was written. I believe you have learned that in order to keep what you have—your security, your confidence, your serenity—you must, in a sense, give yourself away. . . . I feel you should take this material you have written and make a book of it.'"

And so, to brass tacks. Written without the help of any literary ghost (except for a Frank Carothers, who is thanked for organising and editing the original manuscript), *My Story* is rambling, repetitive, and aglow with a kind of Klieg-lit tolerance. (The book is dedicated, for example, to "My mother and father, with love, because I understand them now.") But what finally comes through is Miss Astor's honesty, and her real—and considerable—stature as an actress.

Born Lucile Langehanke, the daughter of an ambitious German immigrant and his embittered wife, her childhood was lonely and unhappy. The family plan was for her to become a motion picture actress, and Lucile (accepting the fact that Father was always right), agreed. The Langehankes moved to New York. Jesse Lasky, Walter Wanger and Louella Parsons met the young hopeful; and Lucile Langehanke became Mary Astor, actress, under contract to Famous Players-Lasky.

Two weeks before her seventeenth birthday she went to Hollywood, where she met John Barrymore (an increasingly alcoholic forty) and fell in love. But Barrymore (affirms Miss Astor) was always a gentleman; and he had dignity. "You could never quite forget that he was John Barrymore. There was a story about a man who did forget and called 'Hey, Jack!' Mr. Barrymore fixed a glittering eye on him and replied icily, 'Why so formal? Just call me kid.'"



John Ford's "Hurricane": Mary Astor and C. Aubrey Smith.

Under the eye of actors like Barrymore and Douglas Fairbanks, Miss Astor learned her trade, became a star, and married for the first time. The marriage was not a success. Slowly recovering from the frigidity into which she had been shocked by her father's crude attempts at sex instruction, she found that her husband was, in effect, impotent. Frustration led her into an affair; pregnancy; and an abortion. A bid to mend the marriage ended with her husband's death in an air crash.

A second marriage (this time to a doctor) produced a daughter, but ended in divorce. And both genuine and forged excerpts from Miss Astor's diary, "loaded," she notes, "with pornographic details," made the action front-page news, until the abdication of Edward VIII pushed it from the headlines.

Miss Astor lists her third and fourth marriages (and subsequent divorces); her conversion to Catholicism; her unhappy love affairs and increased drinking; and the crack-up of her career, all without hysteria or self-pity. She writes warmly of her friends (Humphrey Bogart and Agnes Moorehead), and stumbles only occasionally into the twin bogs of drug-store psychiatry and Get-right-with-God piety. The self-portrait that emerges is one of a likable woman, back on form as an actress. The therapy seems to have worked.

First Person Plural is an exhausting experience. Miss Godowsky—a silent screen vamp who loved (and was loved) by everyone from Valentino to Igor Stravinsky—drops famous names like the fallout from an international William Hickey column. A sample burst: "It is my tragedy that the years have deprived me of my bad reputation. At one time my notoriety assured me of a marvellous evening. . . . Anyway the 'phones don't stop ringing all day. . . . Sandy called to ask me for dinner at '21' on Tuesday. I'll be able to make it because Vera Stravinsky has just got off the 'phone. They're in New York, but Igor was sick again, and we'll have to make it another time. Certainly not Wednesday. Wednesday is canasta with Archduke Franz Josef. . . . Thursday, the Rodgers-Hammerstein opening, then on to supper at Princess Kropotkin's. She finds life so difficult! . . ."

Miss Godowsky writes cheerfully and badly, but she has some good stories to tell. For example, about the night that a rich Texan gave a diamond-studded cigarette box (purchased for his wife) to Grace Moore. "The next morning, the Texan called her apologetically. He felt terrible. He was leaving immediately and didn't have time to make another purchase. Could he have his cigarette box? La Moore was a darling. Of course he could. She sold it to him for the price he originally paid—not a penny more."

First Person Plural hardly ranks as film history. But in its lightweight gossip way it rates a place on the shelf.

PHILIP OAKES

NOTES OF A FILM DIRECTOR, by Sergei Eisenstein. Edited by R. Yurenev, translated from the Russian by X. Danko. Illustrated. (Lawrence and Wishart, 18s.)

THIS IS A TRANSLATED SELECTION from the first Soviet collection of Eisenstein's writing, *Selected Articles*, of 1956, to which the Russian publisher has added a rich group of the working drawings for *Alexander Nevsky* and *Ivan the Terrible*. Though the English and American reader will know, sometimes in a fuller version, most of these twenty articles (half of which are of posthumous publication), there are instances of unfamiliar and valuable passages in such a familiar piece as Eisenstein's introduction to Nestyev's biography of Prokofiev. There is also value in having in this more available form other articles (such as the memoir on the filming of *Potemkin*, and the late essay on stereoscopic films) whose English translations appeared in a more ephemeral periodical. The unquestionable asset of the collection is in the several articles that have not had, to my knowledge, any previous English translation. "How I Became a Film Director" is misnamed here, for it is actually a vivid memoir of Eisenstein's first work in the theatre. "True Ways of Invention" tells how one character, Ignat the armourer, in *Alexander Nevsky*, entered the script and was developed in the course of that film's swift production. "Birth of an Artist" describes the first Moscow screening of Dovzhenko's *Zvenigora*. "25 and 15" is a substantially informative tribute to Tisse on the anniversary of Tisse's first film work. "Colour Film" is the open letter to Kuleshov that Eisenstein was writing when he died. The selection concludes with an essay of 1947, on cinema as a synthesis of the older arts—a subject to which he often returned.

It can easily be seen how any miscellany of Eisenstein's writing, whether journalistic or theoretical, is bound to reveal new facets of his genius. Even the dust-jacket of this volume (in the original Soviet edition) prints a fragment of 1944 not to be found previously, nor is it included in the volume itself. It is worth full quotation here:

Visse, scrisse, amo.

How I should love to confine an article about myself to as many words. Yet my words would probably differ from these in which Stendhal epitomised his life. But then my life is not yet ended. (And I'm afraid I'll see much trouble before it is), So I doubt if three words would be sufficient. Although three appropriate words *can* be found. As applied to me they could be:

Lived, thought, worshipped.

Let the following show what the author lived through, what he thought about, and what he worshipped.

JAY LEYDA

THE TECHNIQUE OF FILM ANIMATION, by John Halas and Roger Manvell. Illustrated. (Focal Press, 42s.)

A SIMPLE, STRAIGHTFORWARD source book on the animator's craft is badly needed. Animation these days is a fast-growing, lively medium with an ever increasing variety of fields and applications. All over the world, new techniques and approaches are rapidly being developed. What we need, then, is a clear, instructive manual with lots of illustrations, showing the basic principles and giving a rough idea of the history and possibilities of the craft. The qualified writers of such a book would have to take a lot of valuable time out from their own active film-making to accomplish this task. With all respect to their effort, Mr. John Halas' and Dr. Roger Manvell's newest book, *The Technique of Film Animation*, does not fulfil this need. At least, not in my eyes.

The Technique of Film Animation is overlong, over-involved and hard to read. It is cloaked in a sense of mystique. It also has a pseudo-Encyclopaedia Britannica ring to it quite unnecessary to its function—which should be that of simple instruction. While all the useful basic points are set down in the book, they are sandwiched in between secondary information, academic verbiage and personal musings and must notes.

The book deals with so many diverse aspects of the medium, from "cel" animation through to puppetry, that it is hard to be specific in commenting on it. To give a general idea, here is a typical paragraph:

"... But when anthropomorphic principles come into conflict with any other laws or principles, the former usually take precedence. For example, if a character has been projected upwards by an explosion and then sees that he is heading for the predatory jaws of some bird of prey, he has to be made to express fright. The laws governing inertia,

air resistance and gravity all insist that the loose appendages of the character should drag or flap back along the way he has come, but anthropomorphism suggests that they should defy gravity and aid the expression of emotion. His hair could stand on end, his eyes bulge, his tongue, collar, tie, fingers and feet stick out, and so on. Depending on the degree of emotion to be emphasised, the physical principles are abandoned for the anthropomorphic ones..."

This sort of heavy, involved description of "how it is done" runs through the entire book and conjures up a picture of Scrooge's book-keeping office: "If Animator Bob Cratchit forgets Newton's 3rd law of motion, he can't have his dinner tonight."

The great pity is that nowhere does the book give the feeling of excitement and adventure in this wide open, lively medium. There is no sense given of the close collaboration which can exist within the studio set-up—of people sparking each other off and of the terrific inventiveness in all departments, let alone the individual worker firing off in an unexplored direction. And, for heaven's sake, where is the humour in the whole business?

There is no secret in animation, and no merit in making a simple job seem more complicated than it is. A smaller book with many more *useful* illustrations of work in progress, and pictures that actually *help* explain the craft, would be gratefully welcomed by those who hope to break into the field and also by potential users of animation, including sponsors and their agents.

RICHARD WILLIAMS

THEATRE ARTS PUBLICATIONS IN THE UNITED STATES, 1947-1952. A five year bibliography compiled and edited by William W. Melnitz. (American Educational Theatre Association, \$3.00)

THE FILM AND THEATRE ARTS are subjects seldom fully documented, so that a bibliography whose stated object is to "embrace all printed material pertaining to the theatre arts—inclusive of motion pictures and radio-television" is bound to be greeted with enthusiasm. Unfortunately this bibliography of material published in the United States between 1947-1952 is of little value to the film historian, largely because it never clearly defines its purpose or coverage where cinema is concerned.

Of the 4,063 items in the bibliography, 382 deal with the motion picture. But even close study of the film section leaves one in doubt about its intended scope. Although twenty separate aspects of the film are covered, from history to script writing and production techniques, several important books are excluded. Among these are Siegfried Kracauer's *From Caligari to Hitler* and Lillian Ross's *Picture*, both published in the United States during this period. James Agee's articles in *Life* get no mention, and the periodical *Hollywood Quarterly*, somewhat bafflingly, is only partially indexed.

Layout and presentation of items are excellent and the author index is good, though it seems strange to give each entry a running number and not to incorporate this in the index. There is, however, one serious deficiency: there is no index of material examined, which would be an excellent bibliographical tool in itself and would indicate the scope of the work more fully than any introduction. Although of obvious interest to the drama enthusiast, the book's omissions invalidate it for the cineaste as a survey of American film research. Nevertheless, it provides a revealing picture of the great variety of material appearing in the United States on the more serious aspects of drama and film. The title page states that this is the American Educational Theatre Association's Monograph No. 1. It is to be hoped that it is the first of a series and that later numbers will be devoted to one specific aspect of theatre and ultimately film research.

DOROTHY BUTLER

BOOKS RECEIVED

ANATOMY OF A MOTION PICTURE. By Richard Griffith. Photographs by Gjon Mili and Al St. Hilaire. (St. Martin's Press, New York, \$5.95.)

LA BELLE ET LE BÊTE. By Jean Boublier. (Le Terrain Vague, Paris, 2,800 fr. Distributed in Britain by Rodney Book Service, 35s.)

HOW PHOTOGRAPHY WORKS. By H. J. Walls. (Focal Press, 42s.)

INDEXES & INDEXING. By Robert L. Collison. (Ernest Benn, 21s.)

INTRODUCTION TO CINE. By H. A. Postlethwaite. (Fountain Press, 12s. 6d.)

THE JAPANESE FILM. By Joseph I. Anderson and Donald Richie. (Charles E. Tuttle Company, Japan.)

WORTH LIVING FOR. By Eva Bartok. (Putnam, 13s. 6d.)

Correspondence

Free Cinema

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—I do not think that the *hara-kiri* of the Free Cinema movement can just be allowed to pass.

Free Cinema has come in for much praise and much criticism during its few years of existence. My main criticism would be that its explicit, and more so, its implicit, aims have been primarily social rather than filmic.

Social aims are certainly a good thing at this moment in time. But this has meant a restriction in the adventurousness of filmic methods. "Looking at" people rather than "looking inside", which would demand fully dramatic techniques. Practically all the films have been at the stage of the Impressionists in painting. Fundamentally trying to give (by various technical means) an impression of reality. As in painting, there is still a wealth of other methods to try.

But all this is by the way. One can say all these things. The fact remains that for numbers of young film makers, and certainly for audiences, the Free Cinema programmes represented an act of faith against the established commercial cinema. More than faith, it was action. And I think it would be a tremendous loss if such action and such faith were given up. Somehow or other the impetus generated by the movement should be kept going. I believe that the kind of programme should be continued and extended in scope, and made a once or twice yearly feature at the National Film Theatre. After all, when the National School of Cinematography gets going, there will, one hopes, be several worthwhile films coming from its activities every year, too.

Free Cinema, Living Cinema, New Cinema—the name does not matter as long as it is broad enough to include and stimulate films of greatly differing techniques and intentions, linked by the common denominator of freshness.

Such programmes would maintain two important features which the Free Cinema movement has established: (a) a focus point for the independent film maker to aim for, (b) a focus point for the attention of audiences, critics, and the public at large; and so ensure encouragement for the continuance and the expansion of independently made films in this country.

Yours faithfully,

MICHAEL ORROM.

Rignall's Lodge,
Great Missenden,
Bucks.

The Negro World

SIR,—I am a Negro and I wish to apologise for the irresponsibilities of some of my people in the course of the season of Negro films at the National Film Theatre. None of the "Negro personalities of the Society of African Culture distinguished in politics and the Arts" who were supposed to introduce the films ever turned up. On one occasion—the Forum on Negro Music and the Dance—not even the organisers turned up to pacify the bewildered and angry audience. Cowardice of this sort is not easily forgiven by white people.

Perhaps the most humiliating aspect of the whole season, from a Negro point of view, was the fact that the only programme which showed some respect for the Negro performers taking part in it was run by a white man—the one on jazz. This, too, was the only one that did not embarrass the audience by muddle, incompetence and sheer silliness.

This whole season has done us more harm than Mosley. We can always blame the white man for being ignorant of the ways of our people, but if Negroes attempt to present their own cause and then find that they are simply incapable of being on time and living up to their own promises, they do irreparable damage to the very cause they claim to espouse.

Please believe me, Sir, that there are some Negroes who do not so very conveniently illustrate the white man's stereotype of our people

The Slide Area

by

GAVIN LAMBERT

Scenes of Hollywood Life



"Having lived twenty years in 'The Slide Area', I can say with some authority that these are the most truthful stories about the film-world and its suburbia I have ever read. Gavin Lambert knows and loves what he describes; he neither sneers, nor sentimentalizes, nor cries sour grapes. How I wish I had written this book!"—

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Times Literary Supplement

15s.

HAMISH HAMILTON

EISENSTEIN

NOTES OF A FILM

DIRECTOR

"What must always strike us about Eisenstein, whether we learn about him from others or read what he himself wrote, is this unique lighting-up of the screen in our minds, this pressure on the cinematic nerve that with others comes only with an actual projection of their films . . ."

—*New Statesman*

Illustrated with numerous photographs and some of the author's original pencil sketches. 18s.

LAWRENCE & WISHART

as lazy, unpunctual, unreliable, inefficient and irresponsible. May I, as a Negro, take this opportunity to apologise to all those members of the National Film Theatre who, like myself, travelled long distances to see programmes which turned out to be either non-existent or wholly different from the ones they had come to see?

Yours faithfully,

JAMES DUBOIS SANDERS.

Park Hotel,
Cardiff.

The General Manager of the National Film Theatre writes: Although we were ourselves aware of shortcomings in the presentation of the Negro World season at the Film Theatre, we would nonetheless like to express our gratitude to those members of the Society of African Culture who were concerned in the organisation of this season, for what they achieved in difficult circumstances.

Commitment?

SIR,—Despite its simplicity, your correspondents (SIGHT AND SOUND, Spring number) have ignored the main point of my previous letter: that many young film enthusiasts of my generation prefer to participate in the actual process of making films (any films about anything), to writing or reading about films. Perhaps it is the case that they should “care” more, although personally I would encourage, not criticise them, as practical experience teaches one a great deal about film.

As to being glad when a minority taste gains broader acceptance: well and good, in some cases. An *avant-garde* movement, however, draws its inspiration—its *raison d'être*—from a minority fighting spirit without which it dies. Loss of conviction, lack of money and the corruption of success can all equally bring about this demise. Similarly nothing can swamp a group of keen young *cinéastes* more quickly than being joined by hordes of people who only like films that are OK: “culture-vultures” out to acquire the right tastes without having to take the trouble to develop an independent critical judgment. Naturally no-one dislikes a film *because* of the quality or quantity of the audience support it gets, and that is not what I meant; yet there is such a thing as liking a film for the wrong reasons...

Many contemporaries I have spoken to think the most depressing thing about SIGHT AND SOUND (agreed, still *the* magazine) is the way it attracts and actively encourages writers like Mr. Fothergill who mix unpardonably aesthetics and politics, substituting certain terms in the latter as criteria in the former and making, thereby, nonsensical aesthetic judgments. If it is once agreed that what we want is good art and not social propaganda, then legislation about the creator's attitude to his society (as the commitment boys require) will not produce it, obviously enough. What is required are artists and what is important about artists is not that they are “committed” or “concerned” but that they can express themselves in an artistic medium (i.e., that they have mastered technique). Mastery of technique (form) seems to be a necessary condition for good art if only because *good art cannot exist without it*. Of course we want more than the bare bones, we want poetry; but (*pace* Mr. Fothergill) I know loads of people who “care,” and most of them can't make films for toffee, still less produce poetry. And it is a strange fact that whereas an exercise in technique is rarely dull, a tract in any medium is usually very dull.

Is it really necessary to remind Mr. Fothergill and his ilk that SIGHT AND SOUND is a *film* quarterly, not a cinema supplement to *ULR*; that it does, and should do more of, precisely what he sneers at: “Articles... wrapped up in technique or general surveys. A director... analysed... judgments... sober and refined.” (Does this mean he wants judgments to be drunken and coarse?) And any anti-SIGHT AND SOUND journal would be out to fill in the gaps or do it better, if it is really a *film* magazine.

Yours faithfully,

I. C. JARVIE.

96 Gloucester Road,
London, S.W.7.

Way Down East

SIR,—I attended the Homage to D. W. Griffith at the National Film Theatre last fall, and was aghast at the fragmentary print of *Way Down East* that was shown. Entire sequences were omitted, individual scenes were incomplete, and the ice flow climax was so cut, and the shots re-arranged, that it had but little resemblance to the thrilling finale Mr. Griffith directed and edited. Obviously, this was a poor dupe print that gave no indication of the lovely, lyrical photography of the original, and of course the tinted stock

and hand-coloured sequences were gone. From the tone of Peter John Dyer's “The Decline of a Mandarin” (Winter issue), I'm sure that his judgment of *Way Down East* is based on this showing. I would very much like Mr. Dyer to see the original print, with tinted stock and colour sequences intact, that is in the archives of the Cinémathèque Française, accompanied by the original musical score, if possible, and perhaps he would accord the work its correct and high value, not only in the gallery of Griffith creations but also in the realm of all-time cinema.

Most prints of *Way Down East* to be seen in the United States today are poor, flat, black-and-white ghosts that duplicate the “sound” version re-issued circa 1930. This was ruthlessly trimmed for running time in grind houses, with major mayhem committed on the proper sequence of the ice scenes. I'm afraid that the original negative was mutilated to prepare this version with music—and it is an irony that the prints circulated currently appear more often without the sound than with it. The National Film Theatre, unfortunately, obtained a very incomplete print of one of these very incomplete prints.

It is rather tragic that creators like Mr. Griffith, Miss Gish, Mr. Bitzer and Mr. Sartov must be judged by the hacked versions of their efforts that survive. To see the current prints of *The Birth of a Nation*, *Intolerance*, *Broken Blossoms* and *Way down East* is to see little more than a silhouette of their original quality.

Yours faithfully,

HERB STERNE.

816 North Mariposa Avenue,
Hollywood, California,
U.S.A.

The Face of Horror

SIR,—In the interesting article on Horror Films (Winter issue) Mr. Derek Hill makes no direct mention of masochism, but it is surely to this strange submerged trait in our psychology that film-makers are most indebted for the profitability of each horror cycle; the genre provides two of the vital elements of masochistic pleasure fulfilment—the fantasy and the suspense. A quality of martyrdom is almost detected in the filmgoer's attendance at horror films, and the fascination and “challenge” of such films seems to be governed to a considerable degree by his willingness to identify himself—not with the villain or hero—but with the victim. Can there be any doubt that the outstanding success of *Dracula* was due to the excellence of the victims chosen by the casting department?

The nature of the problem and some of its causes are revealed by Mr. Hill's study of past horror cycles, but its gravity is difficult to measure. Certainly there have been more jocular than solemn pronouncements about it—self-inflicted wounds are always suspect. The most rewarding aspect of any historical study might be that of the decline of each horror cycle. A point always seems to be reached when curiosity (or indulgence) in horror is satiated, and when unconscious guilt feelings and the idea of punishment are replaced by healthier constructive tendencies in screen plots. However, whether this point is reached concurrently by film-makers and filmgoers, or whether it is the simple pressure of the box-office (and/or censorship) which halts the cycle, and whether the decline really reflects an observable change in the general national well-being, has never been clearly stated for Britain and the U.S.A.

Yours faithfully,

EDWARD K. DEEMING.

Charles K. Deeming Cinema Circuit,
Rex Cinema,
Coalville, Leics.

Film History

SIR,—Further to Ernest Lindgren's letter in SIGHT AND SOUND, Winter 1957-8, I am happy to say a group has been formed called the Society for Film History Research, which aims to encourage research into all aspects of film history.

Two meetings have already been held: Mr. Kevin Brownlow showing rare films from his collection; and a visit to the Kodak Museum.

Will those interested in further details please contact me?

Yours faithfully,

ROSEMARY HEAWORD
Hon. Secretary.

3 Hollybrake,
Bull Lane,
Chislehurst, Kent.

VISCONTI INTERVIEWED

(Continued from page 147)

we saw Livia pass through groups of drunken soldiers, and the very end showed a little Austrian soldier—very young, sixteen or thereabouts, blind drunk, propped up against a wall, and singing a song of victory . . . Then he stopped and cried and went on crying and finally shouted: "Long live Austria!"

Guallino, my producer and a very sympathetic man, came to watch the shooting. He muttered behind my back: "Dangerous, dangerous." Perhaps. But for me this was the perfect finish! We left Franz to his own affairs, we didn't give a damn for Franz! It didn't matter in the least whether he was killed or not. We left him after the scene in the room where he shows himself in his true colours. Pointless that he should be shot. We watched her instead, running to denounce him and then escaping into the streets. She passed among whores, becoming a sort of whore herself, going from one soldier to another. Then she fled, shouting: "Franz, Franz!" And we moved on to the little soldier who stood for all those who paid the price of victory and who was really crying, weeping and shouting "Long Live Austria!"

But I had to cut it. The negative was burnt. Thousands were spent filming Franz's death. I shot it at the Castle of Sant' Angelo in Rome, because we couldn't manage Verona. I tried to do the best I could with it, but for me this isn't the end of *Senso*.

There were other changes made in my script . . . And if they're going to cut everything that matters, then it's not worth the trouble of making films.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Stills:

COLUMBIA PICTURES for *Porgy and Bess*, *The Goddess*, *Middle of the Night*, *Our Man in Havana*, *Anatomy of a Murder*, *You Can't Take it With You*, *Suddenly*, *Last Summer* (photographs by Ken Danvers).
UNITED ARTISTS for *Twelve Angry Men*, *The Horse Soldiers*, *A Hole in the Head*, *Pork Chop Hill*, *Some Like It Hot*, *The Hurricane*.
PARAMOUNT for *That Kind of Woman*, *Fear Strikes Out*, *Oro di Napoli*, photographs of Preston Sturges and Robert Mulligan.
METRO-GOLDWYN-MAYER for *North by Northwest*, *State of the Union*, *Ask Any Girl*.
WARNER BROTHERS for *Stake out on Dope Street*, *Rio Bravo*, *The Nun's Story*.
ASSOCIATED BRITISH-PATHE for *Look Back in Anger*.
BRITISH LION for *I'm All Right, Jack*.
RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS—UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL for *The Killers*, *Son of Dracula*.
UNIVERSAL-INTERNATIONAL for *Spartacus*.
CONTEMPORARY FILMS for *Goha*, *Ashes and Diamonds*, *The Face*.
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for *Ossessione*, *Chaparev*, *End of St. Petersburg*, *The Youth of Maxim*, *The Little Foxes*.
GALA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Scandal in Sorrento*, *Le Amiche*.
ARCHWAY FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Senso*, photograph of Luchino Visconti.
FILMS DE FRANCE for *Les Cousins*.
RENOWN PICTURES for photograph of Robert Siodmak.
UNIFRANCE for photographs of Marcel Camus, François Truffaut, and group of French directors.
INTERCONTINENTAL for *Lovers and Lollipops*.
HILLCREST for *Mon Oncle*.
RIAMA FILM for *La Dolce Vita*.
CARONI FILMS for *Araya*.
PRODUCCIONES BARBACHANO PONCE for *Nazarin*.
SEDIF-LES FILMS DU CAROSSE for *Les Quatre Cents Coups*.
ARGOS FILMS for *Hiroshima mon Amour*.
DISPATFILM for *Orfeu Negro*.
JADRAN FILM for *Train without Timetable*.
UNIVERSALIA for *La Terra Trema*.
LES FILMS DE LA PLEYADE for *Moi, un Noir*.
CHAMPS ELYSEES PRODUCTIONS for photography of Georges Franju.
SIRIUS for *La Tête Contre les Murs*.
COMPAGNIE JEAN RENOIR for *Le Déjeuner sur l'Herbe*.
TOHO for *The Hidden Fortress*.
ARGENTINA SONOFILM for *The Fall*.
ZEBRA FILM—GAUMONT for *General della Rovere*.
CITY FILM CORPORATION for *The Savage Eye*.
UNITED NATIONS FILM SERVICES for *Power Among Men*.
FORD MOTOR COMPANY for *We are the Lambeth Boys*.
JONAS MEKAS for *Pull My Daisy*, *Shadows*, photograph of Lionel Rogosin.
Mme. ANDRÉ BAZIN for photograph of André Bazin.

Material:

ISSKUSTVO KINO for "Deep Screen" by Grigory Kozintsev.

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A GUIDE TO CURRENT FILMS

Films likely to be of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two or three stars

***ANATOMY OF A MURDER** (Columbia) Otto Preminger's long, sensational and slick courtroom drama about rape and murder, adapted from an outspokenly physiological best-seller, and acted by James Stewart, Lee Remick, Ben Gazzara, and Boston lawyer Joseph N. Welch as the judge. *Reviewed.*

***ASK ANY GIRL** (M-G-M) Shirley MacLaine provides the laughs in an exuberant but heavily handled comedy about an innocent working girl at large among Madison Avenue smoothies. *Reviewed.* (David Niven, Gig Young; director, Charles Walters. CinemaScope, Metrocolor.)

***BLIND DATE** (Rank/Sydney Box) Brisk and well-made if illogical whodunit, laced with sex, class feeling and hints of corruption at Scotland Yard. (Hardy Kruger, Micheline Presle, Stanley Baker; director, Joseph Losey.)

BLUE ANGEL, THE (Fox) Flat and pointless re-make of Sternberg's morbid classic, giving Lola a heart and finally bringing Professor Rath back to his senses, botany and boys. (Curt Jurgens, May Britt; director, Edward Dmytryk. CinemaScope, DeLuxe Color.)

BLUE JEANS (Fox) Stilted morality play for adolescents: basement bragadocio, preoccupied parents, climactic car chase by night to prevent an abortion, dubious happy ending. Won't wash. (Brandon de Wilde, Carol Lynley, Marsha Hunt; director, Philip Dunne. CinemaScope.)

BOY AND THE BRIDGE, THE (Columbia) Pretentious whimsy about a world-weary little boy and a seagull setting up house inside Tower Bridge. A more ruthless and experienced hand sorely needed. (Ian MacLaine; director, Kevin McClory.)

DEVIL'S DISCIPLE, THE (United Artists) This deviationist version of Shaw's play would be poor cinema and dull talk if it weren't for the saving grace of Laurence Olivier's stylish, satiric General Burgoyne. (Burt Lancaster, Kirk Douglas; director, Guy Hamilton.)

****FACE, THE** (Contemporary) Ingmar Bergman identifies himself with the superficially worthless entertainer, a mesmerist, in the latest of his dialogues on faith and doubt. Genuinely strange, even horrific, but both narrative and style seem out of hand. Brilliant playing by Max von Sydow, Gunnar Björnstrand, Naima Wifstrand. *Reviewed.*

FIVE PENNIES, THE (Paramount) Danny Kaye as cornetist "Red" Nichols, a well-known bandleader of the '20s, in a heavily heroic and sentimental life story enlivened by Louis Armstrong and some good Dixieland jazz. (Barbara Bel Geddes, Bob Crosby; director, Melville Shavelson. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

GIDGET (Columbia) Midget musical for teenagers offering surf-riding at Malibu Beach, some self-conscious love stuff and three awful songs. (Sandra Dee, James Darren, Cliff Robertson; director, Paul Wendkos. CinemaScope, Eastman Colour.)

***GIGI** (M-G-M) Colette's little fairy-tale of the *demi-monde*, with Lerner-Loewe lyrics and score, Cecil Beaton decor, and Minnelli at his most consciously decorative. Always charming to look at, and sometimes to listen to. (Leslie Caron, Louis Jourdan, Maurice Chevalier, Hermione Gingold. CinemaScope, Metrocolor.)

GREEN MANSIONS (M-G-M) W. H. Hudson's outrageously romantic love story about a jungle nymph and a Venezuelan patriot, turned into yet another clump through the greenery, with Audrey Hepburn as a spritely female Tarzan. (Anthony Perkins, Lee J. Cobb, Henry Silva; director, Mel Ferrer. CinemaScope, Metrocolor.)

****HORSE SOLDIERS, THE** (United Artists) John Ford's five million dollar version of Grierson's Raid through Confederate territory during Grant's advance on Vicksburg. Wonderfully composed battle scenes, the old mixture of roughhouse and spasmodic romance, but a more serious view of the war itself. (John Wayne, William Holden, Constance Towers, Althea Gibson. DeLuxe Color.)

I'M ALL RIGHT, JACK (British Lion) The Boulting Brothers' satire on strikes, trade unions and the Welfare State seems not so much detached as afraid to come out in the open. The result, for all Peter Sellers' brilliance, is more jaundiced than stimulating. (Ian Carmichael, Terry-Thomas, Dennis Price, Margaret Rutherford; director, John Boulting.)

***I WANT TO LIVE** (United Artists) Evasive, journalistic, but sometimes powerful account of the Barbara Graham case, and of her death (censored by five minutes over here) in the gas chamber. (Susan Hayward, Simon Oakland, Theodore Bikel; director, Robert Wise.)

JACK THE RIPPER (Regal International) His bloodstained, apocryphal search for the girl who ruined his son, and his death by crushing in a lift shaft. Made with Lyceum vigour but no imagination. (Lee Patterson, Eddie Byrne, Ewen Solon; directors, Robert S. Baker and Monty Berman.)

JET STORM (British Lion) A hidden bomb and a demented passenger aboard a crowded aircraft. Tensely concocted, routine suspense job. (Richard Attenborough, Stanley Baker, Diane Cilento, Mai Zetterling; director, C. Raker Endfield.)

JOHN PAUL JONES (Warners) His life sketchily telescoped into a naval recruiting poster, with little flair for adventure or spectacle. Multilingual guest appearance by Bette Davis as Catherine the Great. (Robert Stack, Marisa Pavan, Jean-Pierre Aumont, Charles Coburn; director, John Farrow. Technirama, Technicolor.)

LAST MILE, THE (United Artists) Maudlin, heavily theatrical re-make of a thirty-year-old play and film about the psychological pressures felt by men awaiting execution, ending in a futile death house revolt. (Mickey Rooney, Richard Walters, Frank Conroy; director, Howard W. Koch.)

***LAST TRAIN FROM GUN HILL** (Paramount) Kirk Douglas tracks down his wife's killer (Earl Holliman) only to find he is the son of an old friend (Anthony Quinn). An exciting and forceful, though conventional, Western with an excellent performance by Carolyn Jones. (Director, John Sturges. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

****MAIGRET SETS A TRAP** (Rank) A Paris manhunt for a psychopathic knife-killer. Sharp, gripping, subtly acted by Gabin (as Maigret), Jean Desailly, Lucienne Bogaert and Annie Girardot, this evocative Simenon adaptation is Jean Delannoy's best film in years.

****MON ONCLE** (Hillcrest) Jacques Tati's M. Hulot disrupts his sister's starkly functional home and his brother-in-law's plastics factory. A brilliantly perverse progression of variations on a simple comic theme. (Eastman Colour.)

NAKED MAJA, THE (M-G-M) Lavishly dull account of the Goya-Alba romance, whose only hint of authenticity comes from Amedeo Nazzari's Godoy. (Ava Gardner, Anthony Franciosa, Gino Cervi, Lea Padovani; director, Henry Koster. Technirama, Technicolor.)

****NORTH BY NORTHWEST** (M-G-M) Hitchcock's thoroughly entertaining and suspenseful cliff-hanger, with advertising executive Cary Grant the immaculate target for liquidation by James Mason's spy ring. *Reviewed.* (Eva Marie Saint, Leo G. Carroll. VistaVision, Technicolor.)

***NUN'S STORY, THE** (Warners) Best-seller adapted into a stumbling, inhibited study of a Belgian girl who enters a convent to become a nursing sister; documentary elements fascinating, but the interior passion is missing. *Reviewed.* (Audrey Hepburn, Peter Finch, Edith Evans, Peggy Ashcroft; director, Fred Zinnemann. Technicolor.)

***RABBIT TRAP, THE** (United Artists) A succinct and well-written little fable about a plodding father's effort to hold his son's respect. *Reviewed.* (Ernest Borgnine, David Brian; director, Phil Leacock.)

SEVEN WONDERS OF THE WORLD (Cinerama Productions) Large-screen, long-running world tour, taking in the sights of Greece, Japan, India, etc. Carries some excess baggage in the form of Lowell Thomas's deadening commentary. (Various directors; Cinerama, Technicolor.)

SIEGE OF PINCHGUT, THE (A.B.-Pathé) Convict breaks jail to prove innocence, holds family hostage on a Sydney Harbour island: some effective surface detail but not much emotional conviction. (Aldo Ray, Heather Sears, Neil McCallum; director, Harry Watt.)

SLEEPING BEAUTY (Walt Disney) Cute, crude, and finally monstrous cartoon travesty of the old legend, enough to make Charles Perrault's heroine wake up screaming. (Technirama 70, Technicolor.)

SOUTH PACIFIC (Fox) High, wide and generally unhandsome version of the stage musical, stodgily directed by Joshua Logan. Happily the songs survive from a welter of eccentric colour effects and jungle decor. (Rossano Brazzi, Mitzi Gaynor, John Kerr. Todd-AO, Technicolor.)

UPSTAIRS AND DOWNSTAIRS (Rank) Mylène Demongeot conjures a mischievously charming performance out of a jaded slice of domestic comedy about a married couple (Michael Craig and Anne Heywood) urgently in need of a hired help. (James Robertson Justice, Daniel Massey; director, Ralph Thomas. Eastman Colour.)

WORLD, THE FLESH AND THE DEVIL, THE (M-G-M) Sincere but monumentally silly global allegory about a Negro, a white man and a girl, sole survivors of an atomic war. Pacifism expressed through symbolic pigeons; dénouement vaguely in favour of friendship and/or polyandry. (Harry Belafonte, Mel Ferrer, Inger Stevens; director, Randal MacDougall. CinemaScope.)

***YESTERDAY'S ENEMY** (Columbia) Peter Newman's controversial TV play about a British army captain and a Japanese major who both believe in harsh expediency, not the international code, during the 1942 Burma campaign, made into an equivocal, uneven but often tense war film. (Stanley Baker, Leo McKern, Gordon Jackson; director, Val Guest. MegaScope.)

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